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Happy New Year! Feeling suitably relaxed or, like me, a little cuddlier around the middle?! Fear not, this week we have some amazing Pinch of Nom recipes (page 39) that are not only healthy but on a budget too. We even have a FREE three-day gym pass for every reader. There really is no excuse! Also this week, as we come to terms with boxing up the decorations and the house feels that bit emptier – I've decided to make some resolutions, starting with decluttering – a cathartic experience, I am told. See page 4 and find out what the celebrities are planning to change this year. Now, how long until I break my resolutions...?

Once again, Happy New Year to you all.

Hannah

Hannah Fernando, Editor

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THIS YEAR I W

Keeping New Year's resolutions can be tricky. So will the stars be mo

STEPH McGOVERN

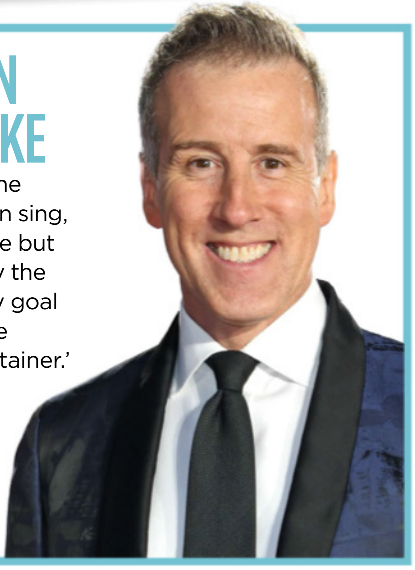
'I have to be honest I don't really do New Year's resolutions because a few days into January I've always given up! But my view going into each year is just to do things that make you happy. That's my philosophy and I think it's better than forcing yourself to do something like "I have to get fit this year"'.

DENISE VAN OUTEN

'I try not to think about making resolutions to be honest but just to spend time with those who mean the most to me.'

ANTON DU BEKE

'To learn the piano! I can sing, I can dance but I can't play the piano... my goal is to be the best entertainer.'



LISA SNOWDON

'Mine is to try and keep a really good balance on everything. To keep that work-life balance on an even keel, not to get too stressed and to just be happy. And also to practise more gratitude.'

CLAIRE SWEENEY

'It's always the same, to keep to the diet. But not be too hard on myself. It's always been "I need to lose a stone" but actually, curves are back in so why not embrace the woman you are. And no beating yourself up! But this year I also want to stop worrying and thinking ahead and try to just live in the moment. I think I realised I should be doing that during lockdown but I need to stick to it!'

JANE McDONALD

'This year my resolution is just to have fun, because life is too short. We haven't had much of it for the last couple of years, so now it's time to just enjoy ourselves.'

WORDS: ARIANA LONGSON. PHOTOS: GETTY, BBC

ILL...

aking any for 2023?

WOMAN EXCLUSIVE

JULIA BRADBURY

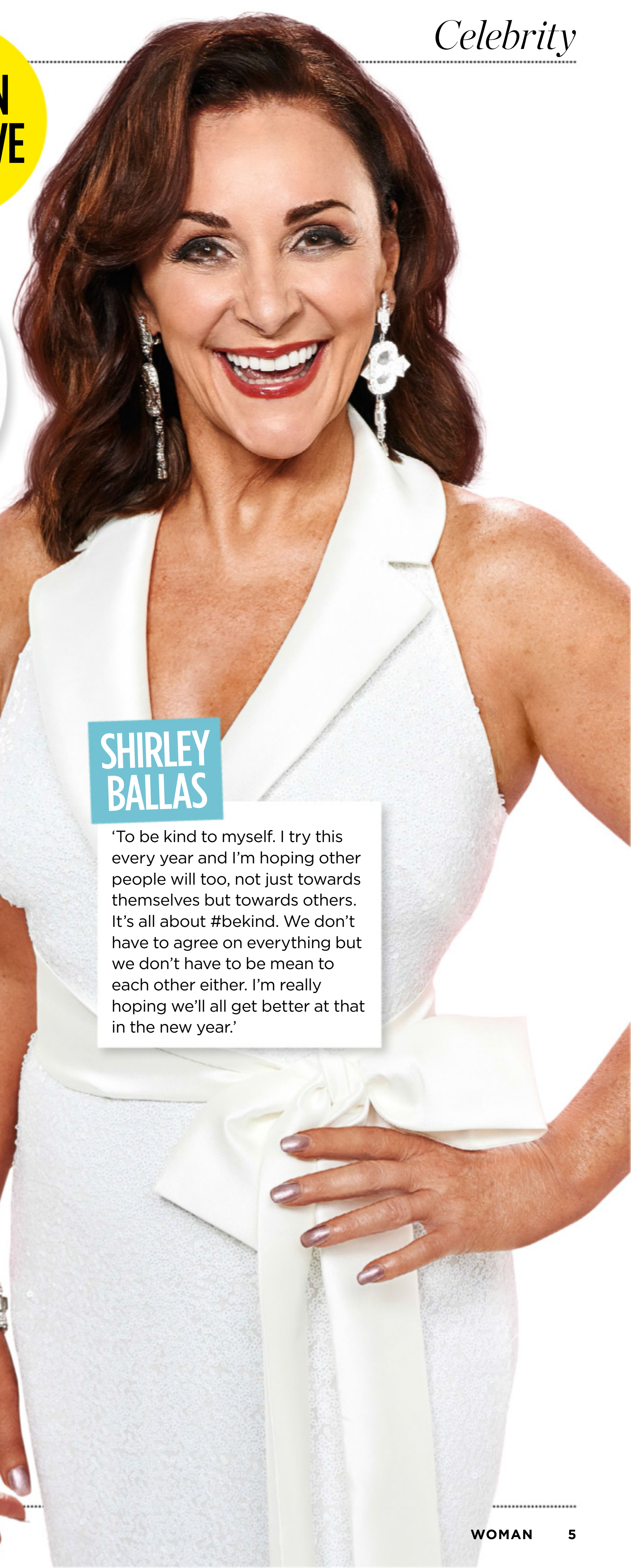
'My biggest resolutions came after my breast cancer diagnosis, so this new year I just want to continue those – to meditate every day, to exercise every day whether that's something gentle or more strenuous, make sure I go outside every day and eat the healthiest foods I possibly can. So my New Year's resolution is to continue along that path to good health.'

RICHARD ARNOLD

'I always make my resolutions in September, they are a lot easier to keep then as summer fades. January usually finds me wishing I'd kept them... From experience, my dry Januarys turn into a monsoon!'

ISABEL WEBSTER

'More sleep! But considering I have to get up at 3am to go to work, that's probably a very unrealistic resolution!'

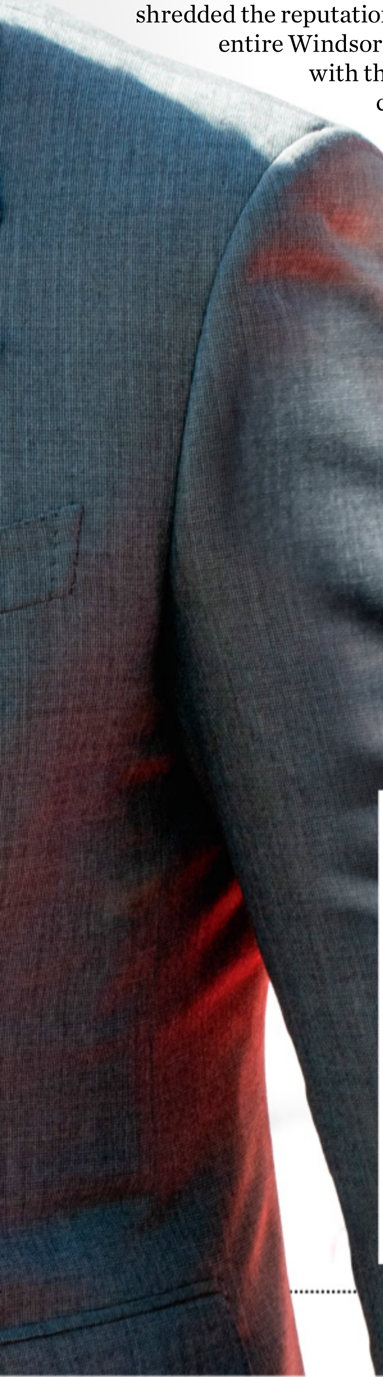


SHIRLEY BALLAS

'To be kind to myself. I try this every year and I'm hoping other people will too, not just towards themselves but towards others. It's all about #bekind. We don't have to agree on everything but we don't have to be mean to each other either. I'm really hoping we'll all get better at that in the new year.'

‘There can be NO TURNING BACK’

A new year and fresh hopes for most, but for William and Harry the battle continues, writes royal biographer Emily Andrews



They were once closer than close; brothers in arms, quite literally.

When Princes William and Harry were living together and training to fly helicopters, they would affectionately joke around and even finish each other's sentences.

The banter could be pretty brutal (William's thinning hair was an endless source of fun) – but the affection was real, and clear for all to see.

Fast-forward to 2023 and the start of a new year – often a time of hope, of reconciliation, of new beginnings.

The thought that William and Harry would bury the hatchet after all-out war has quickly receded.

The Netflix napalm has burned so brightly, it has at times threatened to burn down the very walls of Buckingham Palace.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have shredded the reputations of the entire Windsor clan, with their truth condemning all of them to the immutable taint of intolerance, bigotry and racism.

There can be no turning back. Some may wonder if Prince William can ever forgive his younger brother.

After all, this is the one man whom William said knew him better than anyone, yet whose accusations of prejudice within the Firm forced the Prince of Wales to state, 'We're very much not a racist family.'

It didn't have to be like this.

After the death of Princess Diana, when William was 15 and Harry 12, the brothers leant heavily on each other, at school at Eton and then when they both joined the British Army.

Harry adored the now Princess of Wales, saying she was the sister he never had, and enjoyed a close relationship with both William and Kate once they were married and all three lived at Kensington Palace.

But it was William's warning to Harry that he didn't need to rush things with Meghan, when the pair started dating in 2016, that set the brothers on the current collision course.

It was meant in a benevolent, fraternal way by William – he had often been the only counsel to whom Harry would listen.

William knew the pitfalls and pressure of marrying into the Royal Family and waited until Kate was completely sure before he proposed.

He had his brother's best interests at heart – but Harry reportedly took umbrage.

As Harry and Meghan felt more and more marginalised, William was genuinely worried about his younger brother.

Meghan had, reportedly, not felt welcomed by Kate, there was the infamous incident over Charlotte's bridesmaid dress (it was too short) and both women were said to have ended up in tears.

Meghan and Harry haven't held back in their claims about the Firm

Relations became frostier and eventually ended up in the deep freeze when the Sussexes left the Royal Family and headed to the US.

While the late Queen made a point of insisting that the couple were 'much loved members of the family' and Charles expressed his love for them in his first speech as King, the feeling does not appear to be reciprocated.

'Can William ever forgive Harry?'

At the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral, Harry and William were separated by their cousin Peter Phillips when they walked behind Philip's coffin.

Prince Philip had been seriously ill in hospital when the Sussexes' Oprah interview aired, and many in the family felt it was deeply disrespectful and hurtful.

At his funeral, Harry and William were brought together by Kate, who has tried to act as peacemaker between the brothers, but the small talk amounted to little.

In March, Harry missed the duke's memorial service altogether, because of his security concerns, and at the Platinum Jubilee celebration in June, the brothers didn't exchange any words in public.

Nor was it any better behind the scenes – apparently, aside from a few texts, they weren't speaking. Reportedly, all trust had gone – William could not be sure anything he said would remain private and not end up on their big-bucks Netflix documentary.

After the Queen's death, William invited Harry and Meghan to join him and Kate for a Windsor walkabout to meet well-wishers, but the couples barely spoke.

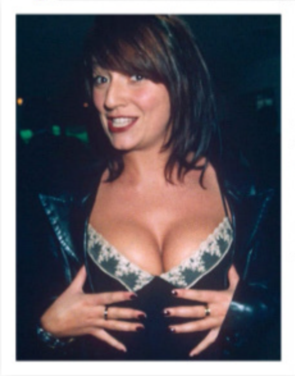
Then, there was hope that perhaps the war was over. But for now, the battle rages on.

Back in 2007, Harry shared a close relationship with William and Kate

PHOTOS: GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK

SOBER CELEBS

This Dry January, we take a look at the stars who abstain from booze all year round



DAVINA McCALL

After battling a drug addiction in her early 20s, Davina McCall turned to sobriety aged 25 and hasn't looked back. The 55-year-old explained, 'I had to grieve not drinking. That was so sad. But I knew that alcohol was the gateway to drugs for me, and it would still be the gateway. It's just not worth it.' Davina insists she's still the life and soul of the party, saying of one do, 'I'm leading the conga round this nightclub to mental rave music, and we're all going completely mad, and I'm just as mad as everybody else, but I'm stone-cold sober.' Good for you, Davina!

BRADLEY COOPER

In the 2018 hit film *A Star is Born* Bradley Cooper played alcoholic superstar Jackson Maine and it seems the plot hit far closer to home than one would originally guess. In 2004 the actor, 48 this week, realised that he needed help and he has since admitted, 'If I continued it [drinking] I was really going to sabotage my whole life.'

SUSANNA REID

A check-up with the doctor, where she was told her BMI was 'too high', saw Susanna Reid cut back and eventually say no to alcohol. The *GMB* star, 52, admitted, 'I miss it. I really do. Because drinking is fun and enjoyable and you can have some of your best nights out but, on the other hand, it adds the weight on… It wasn't good for my skin and it's not great for your memory and I just wasn't willing to pay the price any more.'

PHOTOS: GETTY, INSTAGRAM @SUSANNAREID100, RICHARD YOUNG/SHUTTERSTOCK

COLIN FARRELL

Since 2005, Colin Farrell has remained on the straight and narrow, although he admits it hasn't always been easy. The 46-year-old revealed, 'I was very drunk and high for 16 years, so it was a tough life change.' Before adding, 'Going to rehab was an emancipation for me… I have yet to meet a person whose sobriety has made their life worse.' The actor has since joked, 'Chocolate is the new booze.' Amen to that, Colin.

TAMZIN OUTHWAITE

EastEnders star Tamzin Outhwaite has ditched the booze since hitting the menopause. The 52-year-old explained, 'When I first became menopausal, I realised I couldn't really drink alcohol any more because I'd have one or two glasses and be like, "Oh my God, I need to lie down." And I used to be quite good at drinking! I'd feel dizzy after two drinks and I knew that alcohol was something that I just couldn't deal with. I do feel better without it and I don't feel I need to drink when I go out any more.'

KATE MOSS

Kate Moss lives a very different life from her wild partying heyday. The 48-year-old – whose former love of boozing saw friends call her 'the tank' – gave up alcohol in 2018 and now favours 11pm bedtimes and celery juices over her old partying ways, with a friend close to her saying, 'Me and my sober mates now have a better time than we ever did when we used to drink and take drugs.'

ZOE BALL

Zoe Ball was once a poster girl for the party lifestyle but that's all changed. In 2016, following her split from husband Norman Cook (Fatboy Slim), she ditched booze after realising the extent of her reliance on alcohol to help her get over her shyness. After the suicide of her cameraman boyfriend Billy Yates in May 2017 she admitted, 'Through two of the toughest years of my life, I'm not sure I'd have survived intact had it not been for my sobriety.'

DREW BARRYMORE

Stardom as a child led actor Drew Barrymore down a difficult path. She has been open about her relationship with alcohol, admitting she was 'on a one-way avenue towards self-destruction… I had to accept I was an addict-alcoholic.' But in 2019 Drew, now 47, ditched the hard stuff for good. She revealed, 'One of the bravest things you can do is slay those dragons and finally change an awful cycle in which you've found yourself stuck. For me, it was to stop drinking… It was something I realised just did not serve me and my life.'

GMB's *MOST* *MORNING*

GMB and predecessor GMTV has been the
the milestone we take a look at moments

TAN-TASTIC

Richard Madeley left viewers adjusting their sets when his skin appeared to darken to a deep shade of orange during the course of the show. Unable to disguise his embarrassment, he admitted he'd got ready in the dark that morning, inadvertently confusing his moisturiser for fake tan!

BITTER FEUDS

Despite appearing the best of friends, Eamonn Holmes and Anthea Turner were actually involved in a decade-long feud. Anthea quit the famous sofa after two years, as Eamonn – who was then the show's biggest name – described her as 'Princess Tippy Toes' and reportedly told bosses 'It's her or me'. They buried the hatchet in 2005 when Eamonn reached out to his former co-host.

AWKWARD CHATS

The show's most memorable interview has to be Eamonn Holmes' 'chat' with magician David Blaine, who refused to say more than a few words as Eamonn tried desperately to fill the dead air. Luckily, 18 years later Eamonn interviewed him again for *This Morning* and it was significantly less stressful.

KELLY vs McVEY

Lorraine Kelly made headlines in 2019 when she seemingly 'forgot' former co-host (and now Tory MP) Esther McVey after she was a guest on *Good Morning Britain*. Esther claimed that Lorraine was probably still miffed she was promoted above her back in the day, but the TV favourite revealed that she didn't approve of Esther's political views.

WORDS: GERAINT LLEWELLYN. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, ITV, SHUTTERSTOCK

Good Morning Britain

STORMING OFF SET

Who can forget when Piers Morgan dramatically left the studio after weatherman Alex Beresford confronted him over his 'continued trashing' of the Duchess of Sussex. The clash followed Meghan's interview with Oprah Winfrey and Piers' angry on-air rant. The palaver resulted in more than 41,000 complaints and the outspoken host's time on the show ending after six years.

SHOCKING MOMENTS

king of morning telly for 30 years, so to celebrate viewers were left choking on their cornflakes

DAYBREAK DISASTER

Following *GMTV*'s ratings struggle, the show was relaunched as *Daybreak* in 2011, wooing *The One Show*'s Adrian Chiles and Christine Bleakley (now Lampard). However, it was a ratings flop and the duo were axed 15 months later.

CRINGEWORTHY CONCERTS

Pop stars would rise extra early to promote their latest track with an often badly mimed performance while the presenters clapped along awkwardly. Dancing up a storm, from Britney to Boyzone, Gaga to Girls Aloud – they all showed more enthusiasm before 8am than the rest of us did all day!

Where are they now?

PIERS MORGAN
Piers left *GMB* in dramatic fashion and has since gone on to launch his own show on TalkTV. *Piers Morgan: Uncensored* has seen him interview Donald Trump and give his own 'straight-talking' verdict on the news – hold on to your hats!

LORRAINE KELLY
The icon that is Lorraine was one of the show's main presenters, before bosses rewarded her with her own self-titled series in 2010, which she now presents five times a week.

ADRIAN CHILES & CHRISTINE LAMPARD
Following their axing, the duo dusted themselves down and have continued to work in both TV and radio. Christine presented *Dancing On Ice* for two series before joining *Loose Women*, while Adrian presents a show on Radio 5 Live.

EAMONN HOLMES
Eamonn's 12 years on *GMTV* saw him become one of TV's best-known (and paid) stars. He later joined Sky News before working with wife Ruth Langford on *This Morning* until 2021. Eamonn now presents GB News' breakfast show.

ANTHEA TURNER
After her two-year stint of early mornings, Anthea moved on to pastures new but failed to land a similarly big gig. She later became known more for her personal life (who can forget Flakegate?!) and has had her fair share of reality TV appearances.

ESTHER McVEY
Esther originally appeared on the show as Fiona Phillips' maternity cover before making the move into politics. She became an MP in 2010 and has been in Boris Johnson, Theresa May and David Cameron's cabinets. In 2019 she tried (unsuccessfully) to become Prime Minister.

Promotion

Fancy a game?

PHOTO: GETTY

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The ROYAL INSIDER

By royal biographer Emily Andrews

ISN'T IT TIME FOR MIKE AND ZARA TINDALL TO GET A ROYAL CALL-UP?

Long Live King of the Jungle Mike Tindall! Yes, yes, I know, brilliant footballer Jill Scott won *I'm A Celebrity*... and was rightly crowned Queen.

But Mike won it for me!

He gave enough away to be totally hilarious (such as revealing how he ripped his trousers in front of Princess Anne doing a 'sl*t drop' on the dancefloor at wife Zara's 30th), but said very little about royal life, aside from how he met Zara and that people do actually live in Buckingham Palace. And despite spending weeks in the jungle, the former England rugby player, 44, came across as a thoroughly decent bloke.

Mike and Zara could become 'flexi-royals'

It got me thinking – maybe King Charles has got it wrong with his 'slimmed-down' monarchy. He's lost so many members already, it's slim to the point of skeletal.

Surely Charles and Camilla, at 74 and 75 respectively, shouldn't have to do all the royal donkey work (maybe it was the prospect of opening another factory in Slough on a wet Wednesday that, in fact, drove Meghan back to the US...). Kate and William also have their own charities and work – leaving many of the late Queen's and Duke of Edinburgh's patronages unfilled.

There's also the question of the role that royals play at state banquets, heads of state visits and overseas tours that the four senior royals can't possibly all undertake.

So surely, with their down-to-earth demeanours and obvious senses of humour, isn't it time for Mike and Zara Tindall to get an England (and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) call-up?

They earn their own living – Zara through riding and endorsement deals and Mike via after-dinner speaking and media work – but rarely talk about their royal relatives, except for the odd touching anecdote (Mike's explanation about there being 'so many sweets' for the young royals to get through at the Platinum Jubilee Pageant no doubt had us thinking, 'We've all been there').

So they could become 'flexi-royals' – representing the Crown when needed, taking up royal patronages to raise charity profiles and providing a younger, more relatable face of the Firm.

They're team players and have offered a masterclass on how to earn a living and not cash in, or embarrass, their royal relatives.

I think all our lives would be a bit brighter with more Mike and Zara!

PHOTOS: GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK, NETFLIX

WHAT'S THE LATEST?

King Charles has been busy making coronation plans ahead of 6 May – St Edward's Crown has left the Tower of London to be resized and he is adding to the oath he'll make during the service. It had been thought the King would alter the coronation oath to make himself 'Defender of the Faiths' to show his commitment to all religions, not just the Church of England. But I'm told he'll stick to the script and add a few words either before or after to recognise his respect to the multiple faiths of a diverse Britain in the 21st century.

From the palace

Harry and Meghan's Netflix documentary had a plethora of private details, including the fact they held a small engagement party where everyone wore 'animal onesies'. A friend said, 'Meg and Harry were in matching penguin onesies, because penguins mate for life, and they were so sweet.' Perhaps their penchant for skating on thin ice started even before they married...

Breaking the TABOO

As a new year begins, it's time to stop being embarrassed about women's health

Painful periods, vaginal dryness, incontinence, prolapse. Just reading the words is enough to make many of us recoil in embarrassment or descend into polite awkwardness.

But these are serious ailments many women suffer from – and often in silence. Almost 40% of women are incontinent, 19% struggle with vaginal dryness and over 85% have suffered from painful periods.

Yet, if spoken about at all, these conditions are often discussed in hushed tones between mothers and daughters or friend to friend. And sadly, very few women seek medical help.

Only in recent years have high-profile women started to share their experiences, from Kate Thornton and Davina McCall openly discussing the menopause, to Kate Winslet referencing her stress incontinence on national TV.

As we begin 2023, and many of us embark on a health kick, let's encourage women everywhere to seek help, find solutions and be honest about their suffering.

We talk to three women about their health experiences.

'I THOUGHT IT WOULD RUIN MY BUSINESS'

Grace Lillywhite, 38, runs her own Pelvic Floor Confidence plan at centredmums.com and lives in St Albans with her husband Jamie, 42, and their two daughters.

As a pre- and postnatal Pilates teacher, I was aware of pelvic organ prolapse. It was my biggest fear during pregnancy.

Then, in early 2014, just months after giving birth to my first daughter, a visit to a women's health physiotherapist revealed it had happened to me. I'd suffered some urine leakage and a feeling of heaviness and dragging, but no pain.

However, I couldn't run or do any heavy exercise. I felt embarrassed. I was supposed to teach people how to avoid this, would it look bad for my business? Only I realised that it was helpful for my clients to know it can happen to anyone.

Symptom-free

I worked alongside my physio to find the right exercises, including standing squats, to help strengthen my pelvic muscles. It was a great deal of trial and error to find what worked for me, as no two women are the same. But now, I've been symptom-free for three years and I even ran the London Marathon in October 2022, which I never thought my prolapse would allow me to do.

There's nothing embarrassing about prolapse – in fact, it happens more than we think, and working on your pelvic floor in your 30s is so important!

Grace hopes to use her experience to help others

'I GOT SO ANGRY I'D PUNCH WALLS'

Octavia Lonergan, 42, is the author of children's trilogy *Cats' Eye View* and lives in Coulsdon, Surrey with her husband and twin girls.

After I stopped taking antidepressants for postnatal depression in March 2020, I was plagued with indescribable rage, frustration and mood swings. I found myself having to leave the room so my daughters couldn't see how angry I was. I even punched walls!

Initially putting it down to withdrawal from the antidepressants, I soon realised it was something more.

When I called my GP at the end of 2020, she referred me to a gynaecologist. By this time I was convinced I was perimenopausal but nothing showed up on any tests.

I started tracking my symptoms, as they ebbed and flowed, but it didn't seem as though it synched up with anything. Only,

WORDS: ASHLEIGH PAGE. DR SALOOJEE PHOTO: THEO MCINNES. MAIN PHOTO (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY

'If being honest helps just one person, it's worth it'

speaking with a friend about what was happening, she told me about her premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), a condition which causes severe irritability, depression, or anxiety in the week or two before your period. It was like a lightbulb had gone off. And I noticed my cycle had actually shortened and my mood swings were in line with my periods.

Being open

Armed with my new information, I went back to the gynaecologist, who confirmed I had it. I was prescribed Citalopram, a type of antidepressant, in February 2021, which alleviated a lot of my symptoms, and in November 2022 I had a hysterectomy.

As someone who loves to feel in control, I struggled to tell people at first. But if being open about my condition helps just one other person, any embarrassment is worth it.

'I'M LEFT UNABLE TO HAVE A BABY'

Suzanne Sallam is a cultural architect who runs suzannesallam.uk and lives in York with her husband Bob.

Periods weren't something that were discussed when I was growing up. Even when I complained of severe pain, and had to take high-dosage pain relief, it was brushed off as 'normal.'

By the age of 25, I had been to the GP with severe bloating, period pains and acute acne on my back 15 times. Every time I was misdiagnosed with various ailments and given antibiotics, but nothing helped. I ended up on the pill, which masked the pain, but not for long.

Painful journey

At the age of 32, I came off the pill, but the pain throughout my cycle was so severe that I had to take time off work.

Years went by with me suffering in silence, believing this to be 'normal'. One gynaecologist told me I had scar tissue, which could potentially be endometriosis. This was the first time I had ever heard of endometriosis. They said the best thing I could do was get pregnant. My husband and I tried for a baby, but were struggling to conceive. Maybe this was the reason?

Two years later, another consultant diagnosed me with stage 4 endometriosis and PCOS. They found growths across my abdomen, and one of my ovaries was ruined. The only way to manage it was to remove my ovaries completely.

My journey continues to be painful, both physically and emotionally. This is why I'm sharing my story. It's not OK to have painful periods. Women need to be listened to and more awareness is needed around endometriosis. It's OK to advocate for yourself and ask for a second opinion.

Feeling nervous? HOW TO TALK TO YOUR GP

Dr Roshaan Saloojee, lead GP at digital healthcare provider livi.co.uk, says:

1 **MAKE NOTES** Writing down symptoms, experiences or questions beforehand can help you remember important details.

2 **TRY A DIGITAL APPOINTMENT** If you're worried about discussing symptoms face-to-face this might make it easier to talk openly.

3 **EDUCATE YOURSELF** It can help to have some useful language to describe your experience. Stick to reputable sources like nhs.uk

4 **BE SPECIFIC** Knowing the timeline and sharing details of your symptoms can help your doctor understand.

5 **ASK QUESTIONS** Appointments can sometimes be overwhelming. It's OK to ask questions to understand your doctor's advice.

6 **TELL YOUR GP YOU'RE NERVOUS** This can help them understand you may need more time. Simply getting it out in the open can reduce anxiety.

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Your LOOKS

Style | *Beauty* | *Health*

GARNIER SKINACTIVE
Micellar Cleansing Water All-in-1
NOUGHTY 97% NATURAL
WAVE HELLO
CURL DEFINING SHAMPOO
L'ORÉAL PARIS ELVIVE
Dream lengths Curls

BEAUTY SUPERSIZED

If you needed an excuse to overhaul your beauty cabinets, this would be it. Opting for larger products can save money – and the planet – by reducing the amount bought and plastic used. Grabbing L'Oréal's bumper-sized curl mask with your food shop means you won't reach the end as quickly, and Noughty's jumbo shampoo works out at just 20p a pump. So, go big – your purse and the planet will thank you. **Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water 700ml, £7.99, Waitrose & Partners; Noughty Wave Hello Shampoo 1ltr, £20.99, lovenoughty.co.uk; L'Oréal Elvive Dream Lengths 3-in-1 Curls Hydration Mask 680ml, £6.80, Ocado**

GO LARGE AND SAVE MONEY!

WORDS: DARCY BROWN. IMAGE: PHILIP SOWELS

High street *MUST-HAVES*

Our top picks of great-value fashion this week

1

RIPPLE EFFECT Elevate your basics with a striking marble print. The soft, stretchy fabric makes this piece perfect for layering. **Top, £12, sizes 6-24, Very**

2

PAVEMENT POWER Platform soles help add a little height while remaining comfortable. Team with floaty dresses and slightly cropped trousers. **Boots, £39.99, Deichmann**

3

ACCESSORY UPDATE This charming necklace will add interest to your everyday favourites. **£15.99, parfois.com**

4

STRIPE HYPE Nod to nautical with a chunky, wide-striped knit. **Jumper, £17.99, sizes xs-xxl, H&M**

5

EVERYDAY VALUE Anyday at John Lewis is great for reputable quality and stylish designs at budget-friendly price points. Shirt, £30, and jeans, £30, both sizes 6-20, Anyday at John Lewis & Partners

6

SOLE MATES

Step out in this season's must-have shoe – the chunky loafer. Wear with everything from dresses and jeans to skirts and trousers.

Jacket, £35, top, £18, jeans, £20, all sizes 8-24, and shoes, £20, all Tu Clothing

7

TIMELESS TAILORING

Keep the chills at bay with a smart coat.

£46, sizes 8-20, Matalan

8

WARDROBE ESSENTIAL

This classic design will always be in style.

Shoes, £32.99, Zara

9

HATS OFF

Hats don't get more stylish than the timeless fedora.

£12.99, New Look

10

CHAIN REACTION

The perfect carry-all tote – the squishy texture and contrasting chunky-chain handles tick all the right boxes.

Bag, £42, Next

COMPILED BY: ELOISA JOHNSON

Steal their STYLE

Embrace wintry textures and tonal shades in chunky knits and statement coats

Give your knitwear a glamorous edge, like ***FRANKIE BRIDGE***

Stay warm and stylish in jumper dresses and fuzzy coats, perfect for taking your look from day to night. Nail that high-low look by mixing textures – a chunky knit with a silky skirt, finished with delicate gold jewellery.

Boots, £49.99, New Look

Coat, £68, sizes xs-xl, Anyday at John Lewis & Partners

Bag, £20, ego.co.uk

Dress, £49.99, sizes 4-16, Mango

Dress, £25, sizes 6-24, Very

Earrings, £8, Accessorize

Coat, £79.99, sizes xs-xxl, Zara

Boots, £34, Peacocks

Blazer, £35, sizes 6-18, Nobody's Child

Boots, £39.99, New Look

Dress, £25, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing

Necklace, £6, Peacocks

COMPILED BY: CHARLIE BELL. CELEBRITY PHOTOS: GETTY

Jumper, £35.99, sizes xxs-xl, Mango

Skirt, £22, sizes 8-20, Very

Bag, £25, Accessorize

Shoes, £24.99, Deichmann

Jumper, £27.99, sizes xs-xl, Stradivarius

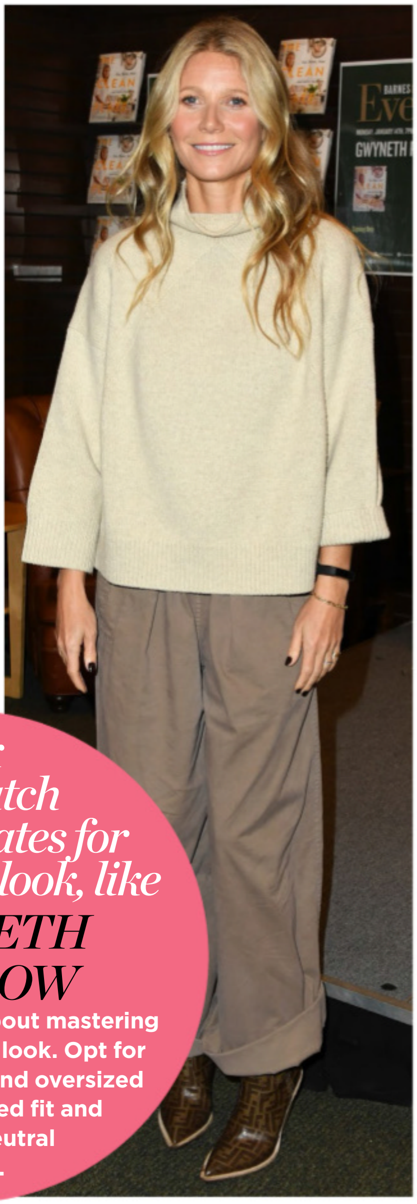
Trousers, £54, sizes 6-20, La Redoute

Boots, £28, Peacocks

Earrings, £7.99, parfois.com

Jacket, £35, sizes 8-24, Tu Clothing

Trousers, £13.99, sizes 4-22, H&M



Jumper, £42, sizes xs-xxl, Next

Trainers, £24.99, H&M

Coat, £45, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing

Trousers, £40, sizes 6-26, Next

Jumper, £55, sizes s-l, M&Co

Boots, £29.99, Stradivarius

Mix and match cosy separates for an effortless look, like GWYNETH PALTROW

Winter dressing is about mastering that comfy yet cool look. Opt for wide-leg trousers and oversized knits for a relaxed fit and stick to a neutral palette.

Get a facelift WITHOUT SURGERY

Taming your eyebrows is the secret to looking 10 years younger – here's how to get an arch revival

The Ordinary.
Multi-Peptide Lash and Brow Serum
Sérum Multi-Peptides pour les Cils et les Sourcils

1 Grow them out

It's normal for eyebrows to get more sparse as we age, but having lived through the thin brow trend of the 1990s certainly doesn't help. If you have very thin brows, stop plucking them for at least eight weeks – this will allow you to see what they really look like in their natural state. You can boost growth with a serum like **The Ordinary Multi-Peptide Lash and Brow Serum, £12.40, Boots.** Perseverence is key – use it daily and you'll notice a difference within a few weeks.

brushworks

2 Find your perfect shape

'Brows will always look the most beautiful and help balance all facial features if they follow their natural shape,' says Vanita Parti MBE, founder of Blink Brow Bar. 'Don't try and create what you don't have – by removing a few hairs underneath to lift the arch, you instantly lift your eyes, sculpt and enhance your cheekbones.' If you're starting from scratch after all your efforts growing your brows out, we'd leave shaping to the experts. Threading usually costs around £10 in your local salon, then you can keep them tidy with tweezers at home. **Brushworks HD Tweezer Set, £7.99, lookfantastic.com** contains four different types – we particularly like the pointed option, for grabbing the really tiny hairs.

3 Tint a new tone

'Tinting is one of the quickest ways to achieve thicker, natural-looking brows,' says Vanita. 'It's a great long-lasting option, particularly for those with white or blonde hair, as it can reveal a thicker brow that you never thought you had!' You can tint brows in a salon (it's usually around £7-£10), but **Eylure Pro-Brow Dybrow, £8, Sainsbury's,** is an easy, faff-free way to do it at home. Always do a patch test.

NEW EASY MIX FORMULA
SAME GREAT RESULT
EYLURE
LONDON
DYBROW
PERMANENT TINT FOR BROWS
BLACK

SKINNY DEFINER
BROW ARTIST
L'ORÉAL PARIS

4

Fill in the gaps

If you still have some areas you want to add fullness to, you can use a pencil to work some magic to cheat it. The key thing to remember is that you're not just adding colour, you're trying to mimic those tiny brow hairs. Follow the shape and make precise, light strokes, and use a very thin pencil like **L'Oréal Paris Brow Artist Skinny Definer, £7.99, Superdrug.** Eyebrow pens can also create a really natural look – try **Barry M Feather Brow Defining Pen, £5.99, barrym.com.**

feather brow
BROW DEFINING PEN
BarryM

5

Hold everything in place

As we age, our eyebrow hairs can get a little more unruly, which is the last thing you want when you're creating a sleek new shape. **NYX Professional Makeup Brow Glue Instant Brow Styler, £7.50, Boots,** is a clear gel that holds them in place all day. **Max Factor Brow Revival Densifying Eyebrow Gel, £9.99, Tesco,** is tinted and has tiny fibres in the formula, which cling to your hair to create defined, fuller-looking brows.

X FACTOR
DENSIFYING BROW MASCARA
NYX
PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP
THE BROW GLUE

WORDS: RHIANNON DERBYSHIRE. MAIN PHOTO: GETTY

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woman

Visit anytimefitness.co.uk/woman for your free pass

Feel great

ANNIE DEADMAN IS HERE TO HELP YOU, THE EASY WAY!

The best way to measure success

If you only read one column of mine in this magazine over the next six months, make it this one. As we embark on January, with all its hope and promise, the words I write here won't sit comfortably and you'll want to protest and convince yourself I'm wrong. But just hear me out. It's about how you measure progress when starting your 'new year, new you' fat-loss plan. Yes, fat-loss. Not weight-loss. Understanding the difference will save you a lot of disappointment.

Our weight is the sum total of our body. Muscle, bone, fat, tendons, organs and lots of water (60% water actually). If you're constipated, you'll weigh more. If you have a cold, you'll weigh more. If you have your period, you'll weigh more. Hormones, stress, illness – none of those have anything to do with fat, but they will influence what the scales say.

Fat is a small proportion of your weight, but it's the stuff that makes the dress cling, the trousers tight and the buttons on your blouse pull. Your fat-loss plan (if it's any good) will recommend you eat healthy food, just less than you normally have. In addition, you'll be using your muscles as you ramp up your activity levels over the coming weeks. That burns energy. So... hooray... your body is having to use up those fat stores to find extra energy.

With more exercise, your muscles will become denser, firmer and stronger, so you'll have less fat, but more muscle. Not bigger muscle, just firmer. You may not see as much movement on the scales as you expect, but the shape and composition of your body will change. You don't need to worry how light you are.

If you are determined to use the scales, weigh every single day at exactly the same time wearing nothing or the same clothes. Make a note of the number and calculate the average over a week. You will see how weight fluctuates every day and that a tape measure is far less likely to mess with your head. See my tip below and let's start 2023 as we mean to go on!

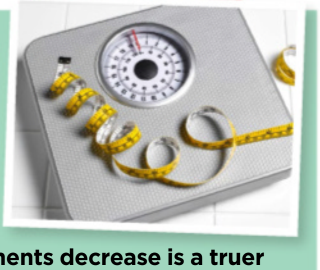
Annie x

* **Annie is a fitness coach and creator of nutrition and fat-loss programme The 21 Day Blast Plan, aimed at motivating women towards health and confidence. Find out more at theblastplan.com**

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

'Accept what is, let go of what was, and have faith in what will be.'

ANNIE'S TIP



Weigh yourself – once. Then put the scales in the loft. Use a tape measure to take a few body measurements, note them down and repeat after two weeks. Watching circumference measurements decrease is a truer picture of how your journey is panning out than a number on scales. By all means retrieve the scales and see how your weight is doing, but it's not the be-all and end-all of success.

Give this a go...

SLIM AND SAVE!

If you're looking to shape up this month, take four body measurements: chest (over nipples), waist (through natural indentation), hip (over largest part of bottom) and one other. For every centimetre you lose off those places, put 50p into a jar. At the end of January, donate that to your favourite worthy cause.

PHOTOS: GETTY. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP

How to get what you want in 2023

Fed up with not putting yourself first? Start the new year being more assertive

If you've ever said 'yes' to an invite when you wanted to say 'no', or stayed quiet when someone pushed in front of you in a queue, you may lack assertiveness. 'So many women have a phobia of being perceived as rude,' says Rebecca Reid, author of *The Power Of Rude: A Woman's Guide To Asserting Herself* (£13.99, Trapeze). 'As a consequence, they don't know how to be more pushy and often don't know how to get what they want from life.' So if your wants, needs and dreams are falling by the wayside, try these techniques.

Quit saying sorry

Apologising when you've made a mistake is a sign of strength. 'But there's a tendency for women to say sorry too much,' says Rebecca. If you cut out all the unnecessary apologies you'll come across as more assertive. 'Sometimes we say sorry when we really mean thank you. Try saying, "Thank you for your patience," instead of "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting." The person you thank feels appreciated, but you haven't admitted any unnecessary fault.'

Say 'yes' less

It's easy to agree to things and then feel resentful about it. Being assertive is about making an assessment and actively deciding to do or not do something, says Rebecca. 'If you're unsure, have some stock answers ready. You could say, "Let me get back to you on this." You'll gain space to think about whether you really want to go to a social event or look after your neighbour's cat.'

Be honest

'When you communicate honestly and clearly to other people, it makes your relationships more genuine,' says Rebecca. That doesn't mean it's OK to be selfish, but you are allowed to be true to yourself. 'If you're not willing or can't attend something, you should feel able to say so, rather than making up a lame excuse.'

Set your goals

Not sure what you're striving for? You're not alone. 'Many women are so busy running around, putting the needs of other people before their own, that they totally lose track with what it is they want,' says Rebecca. 'But if you're not clear about what you want, how can you expect to get it?' Spend 15 minutes focusing on your dreams and desires. Write down the changes that you'd love to make in 2023 and think about how to make them possible.

PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP

Agree to disagree

You can't make a person do what you want but you can exchange beliefs, opinions, needs and wants respectfully. 'Listen to what someone is saying and try to see their point of view. But remember, it's fine to agree to disagree. Being assertive isn't about making the other person feel they're wrong,' says psychologist Ingrid Collins.

Watch your body language

'Your words won't carry much weight if you shuffle apologetically, sit hunched and sound hesitant and unsure,' says Rebecca. An assertive person speaks calmly and clearly, sits or stands upright, maintains good eye contact and is interested and engaged. To improve how you come across, practise speaking in front of a mirror, or ask a friend if they will give you some feedback.

Work on your self-esteem

'If you've got good self-esteem you'll feel positive about yourself and believe you can achieve your goals,' says Ingrid. 'This makes it easier to set boundaries, make decisions and assert yourself.' Past trauma, stress and difficult life situations can affect self-esteem, so anything you can do to build it up will also help you to become more assertive.

CHECK YOURSELF!

Avoid these postures that will zap your confidence:

- **Arms crossed**
- **Hunched shoulders**
- **Hands folded in lap**

Use the right words

'Assertiveness uses "I", rather than "you",' says Ingrid. 'If you say to someone, "You're not letting me speak," it distances the other person and you're less likely to get your voice heard.' Instead, say, 'I need to talk to you and I'd love you to listen.' This draws the other person in and means you're taking responsibility for your part in the conversation, says Ingrid.

Set boundaries

'A boundary is where you draw the line of what's acceptable to you and what isn't,' says Rebecca. 'Being assertive means knowing what your boundaries are and not being afraid to stand up for yourself when you feel they're being crossed.' A lot of women treat themselves as beneath others, but there's no need to create an environment where you're the least important person in every situation.

FIVE WAYS TO BOOST YOUR SELF-WORTH

- **Spend time with people who make you feel good.**
- **Do more of the things you enjoy.**
- **Keep a journal and write down all the things that are good about you, including positive comments from friends and family. Look at this whenever you doubt yourself.**
- **Look after your physical health by eating well and exercising regularly.**
- **Try psychotherapy or counselling if you struggle with low self-esteem.**

BEAT PAIN by the weekend

You don't have to pop pills or spend money to ease your everyday ailments

Ten million of us experience pain daily, which affects our quality of life, says The British Pain Society. But, before you head to your medicine cupboard and knock back another couple of tablets, or splash out on private treatments to ease that bad back or tension headache, try these soothing suggestions instead. From getting frisky to practising mindfulness, there are plenty of at-home remedies to help fix your pain – fast.

Breathe out

'Breathing techniques can calm your nervous system and reduce muscular tension,' says osteopath Sam Maddock. Breathe in through your nose for four seconds. Pause for one second. Breathe out slowly for six seconds to calm your body.

Say yes to sex!

Sex can be more effective than painkillers. Yes – really. In fact, neurologists from the University of Münster found that more than half of migraine sufferers said their symptoms improved after it, while one in five of them experienced complete relief after getting frisky.

Look at photos you love

Simply getting the photo albums out can help release pain-relieving chemicals, found researchers at the University of California. Looking at art you enjoy can also help reduce the pain response, found Italy's University of Bari. Trip to a free gallery anyone?

Be mindful

People who say pain is in the mind may be on to something. Nikki Harman, aka The Mindful Nurse, explains, 'Imagine your pain as something physical – it might be a cartoon character, a shape or a colour. As you breathe, visualise something destroying that image.'

Try an ice pack...

These can be used for sprains and recent injuries, joint swelling, bites, headaches and toothache. Avoid using ice for an acute bladder infection, as it can aggravate the pain, or on the chest if you have asthma. Place a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice in a tea towel, wrapped in a plastic bag.

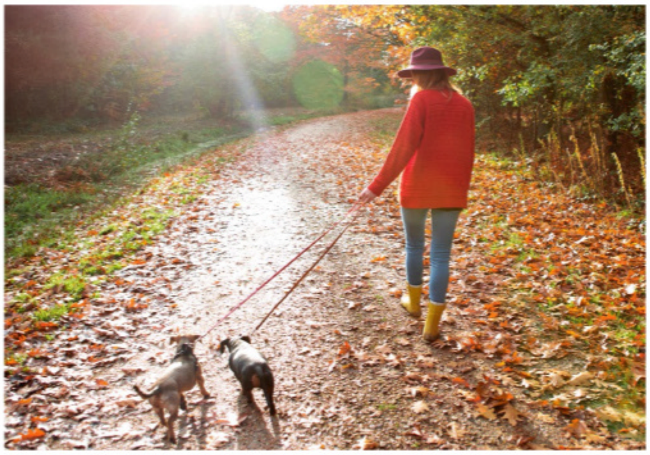
...or warming compress

This is ideal for painful joints, a sore throat or backache. Wring out a cotton cloth in cold water (so that it's damp, not dripping) and wrap around the affected area, allowing the ends to overlap. Then wrap an outer material – wool or flannel is ideal – around this firmly and secure with safety pins. As the cold cloth slowly

warms, the effect is deeply relaxing.

Keep a journal

It's useful not only to record information about your pain to show to a healthcare professional, but also so that you can spot patterns emerging around your activities and symptoms. You could score your levels of pain with numbers, or record the location of pain on a body map.



Keep moving

Take breaks from sitting. Get up and walk about every 20 minutes. Stand up and hug your body – right hand on left shoulder and left on right. Shrug shoulders and try torso twists to ease the spine. Plus, five times a week, aim for at least 30 minutes of heart rate-raising exercise.

Try the cat pose

The classic yoga move will help loosen up tight areas in your lower back. On all fours, inhale to slowly dip your spine and open your chest. Then exhale to slowly arch your back like an angry cat. Look for beginner yoga or Pilates videos on YouTube.

Have a chuckle

'Laughter can lower cortisol and trigger endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals,' says Rebecca Kelly from Haelan Therapy. 'Laughter can't take away the pain, but it can detract from its intensity.'

Roll with it

Neck pain? Try this tennis ball trick. Stand against a wall, place the ball behind your neck and move it around the painful area. The pressure increases blood flow, bringing more oxygen and nutrients to aid repair.

Adjust your sleeping position

Are you a side sleeper? Place a pillow between your knees to prevent your lower spine twisting. Back sleepers should place a pillow under their knees and a small rolled-up towel under the small of their back, while front sleepers should reduce strain by placing a pillow under their pelvis and lower abdomen.

When to seek support

If you're living with persistent pain, see your GP for help and advice. If it is severe, you may be referred to a pain clinic for free, which can offer treatments, such as hypnotherapy.

Power up your diet

'Your body needs proper nutrition so that the muscles can continue to move and support your spine,' says holistic therapist, Sophia Kupse*. 'If you haven't eaten regularly and sensibly, your muscles may stop working for you. They can weaken, tighten up and become more susceptible to fatigue-related injury and emotional stress.'

Pack your meals with fresh fruit and vegetables, wholegrains and pulses for a steady supply of energy for your muscles. Be sure to eat some vitamin D-rich foods too (such as eggs, oily fish and mushrooms). 'Of people with lower back pain, 80% were deficient in vitamin D, found one study,' Sophia says.

And don't deny yourself chocolate. 'The joy factor comes from its uplifting, dopamine-boosting properties,' says Dr Dougall McCorry. Stick to quality dark chocolate (in moderation) as it contains fibre, iron, magnesium, copper, manganese and other minerals.

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. *FOUNDER OF LT THERAPY FOR BACK PAIN; THEMUSCLEWHISPERER.CO.UK. PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY

The clinic

WOMAN'S GP DR PHILIPPA KAYE ON HER TOPIC OF THE WEEK

7 health resolutions a doctor wants you to make

Ensure 2023 is your healthiest and happiest year yet with these simple but effective lifestyle tweaks

It's the first week of January – the time when everyone is talking about New Year's resolutions. The promises that you make yourself each year that, in reality, most people only manage to keep for a few weeks or so before breaking!

There are lots of reasons why it can be so hard to keep them, one of which is that we make them too complex. So break down your aims into smaller goals. After all, it's better to make small changes which you can stick to over time and then slowly progress, than to aim for big changes which are unachievable. Small, imperfect steps, over unachievable perfection, is how you will make effective progress. Here's what I recommend:

1 ATTEND SCREENINGS

If you have been invited for breast, cervical or bowel cancer screening, don't put it off. Make your appointments, or complete your sample (for bowel cancer screening), and get it done. This is my top tip because, quite simply, screening saves lives.

2 GET A SEXUAL HEALTH CHECK

Are you sexually active? Some tests are available for free online. Go to nhs.uk to find out more. Start the year knowing whether or not you have a sexually transmitted infection and get treated, if that is needed.

3 DON'T WORRY ABOUT 'BOTHERING' YOUR GP

If you have a health worry or concern, something which is niggling you, or just isn't quite right for you, then speak to your doctor. After all, you are the expert in your body so if something changes and you think it isn't 'normal', then you must get it checked out. The NHS is open and wants to see you. With

HEALTH NEWS

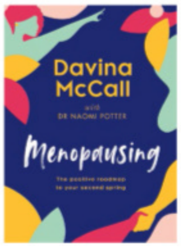
BY JENNY ROWE

Fill up on frozen

Feeling the pinch? If you're seeking money-saving ideas that don't cut corners when it comes to your health, your freezer may hold the answer.

Frozen fruit and veg is not only cheaper and lasts longer, it can also be more nourishing than fresh produce. Some vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin C, are actually higher in frozen fruit and veg compared to fridge-stored produce, according to an American study*. So you definitely don't need to feel guilty when searching for bargains down the frozen aisle. In fact, you may even find that there are a greater variety of fruits – such as acai berries – available frozen. And if you're looking for organic or wild-caught produce, frozen options can save you the hefty price tag.

DEMYSTIFYING MENOPAUSE



Following Davina McCall's two Channel 4 documentaries on the subject, she has now released a new book, *Menopausing* (£22, HQ), alongside GP and British Menopause Society accredited specialist doctor, Dr Naomi Potter. Together, they explain the science, debunk the myths and talk without shame about all aspects of the perimenopause and menopause. If you need help making important decisions about your hormonal health right now, this is the resource you need.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If you are tempted by some more 'extreme' health resolutions, such as fasting, speak to your GP first to check if it's the best option for you.

many health conditions, time is a factor, and an early diagnosis and treatment is always better where possible.

4 MOVE YOUR BODY

So many of us make New Year's resolutions to go to the gym or take up a new sport, but any way that you can move your body and do more physical activity is good for your health, irrespective of your weight and current fitness level. Start small with changes like getting off the bus one stop early or walking up stairs instead of using a lift.

5 STOP SMOKING

This one actually saves you money, as well as improving your health. Stopping smoking has so many health benefits, decreasing your risk of heart disease, cancer, lung disease and more. Your GP surgery is likely to have smoking cessation advice or you can download the free NHS Quit Smoking App.

6 ADD TO YOUR DIET – DON'T TAKE AWAY

Instead of restricting what you eat and removing all the foods you love, why not try adding in an extra portion or two of fruit and vegetables per day – full of fibre and healthy nutrients.

7 LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

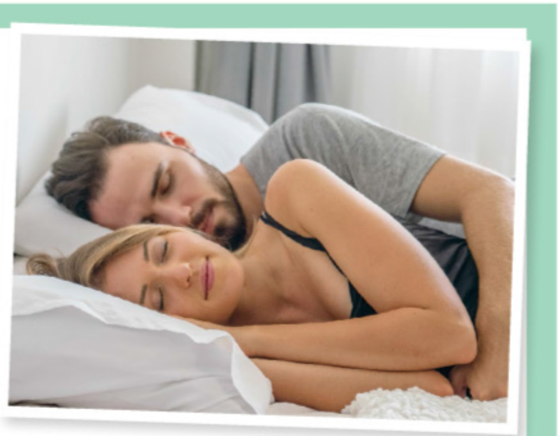
This will look different for everyone. It might mean adding a walk outside to your daily routine, or putting your phone down an hour earlier at night-time or prioritising sleep. Be kind to yourself.

Halt the decline

If you're already taking a daily multivitamin, you'll want to continue – and if you're not, this might change your mind: those taking the supplement for three years slowed their rate of cognitive decline by 60% – saving about 1.8 years – in a US study of 2,000 pensioners. While more research is needed, there's no harm in adding one to your morning routine.

BED-SHARING IS CARING

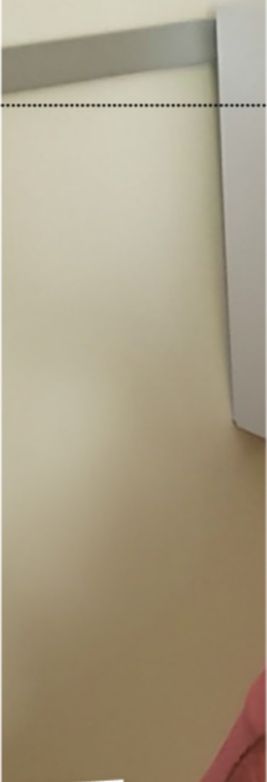
Sleeping apart – or having a so-called 'sleep divorce' – is on the rise: one in six British couples do it, a third of which have done so for more than five years**. For some, it's the best solution; perhaps if one or both of you snore. However, if you can learn to put up with your partner's sleep habits, it may actually do your health some good. People who never slept with a partner or spouse were more likely to suffer insomnia than those who did most nights, found a recent US study. Sleeping alone was also linked to higher depression scores and worse life and relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, couples that shared a bed got better quality sleep and were less likely to feel tired the next day. So, if you're struggling to sleep, before you boot your other half out of the bedroom, consider trying a few other things first, such as wearing a set of earplugs or re-establishing a regular sleep routine.



IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. CHECK WITH YOUR GP OR MEDICAL EXPERT BEFORE TAKING NEW SUPPLEMENTS. PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY. *JOURNAL OF FOOD COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS. **NATIONAL BED FEDERATION

Giving birth left me *SUICIDAL*

Alice Wright didn't experience the joy she'd expected when her twins were born



Nestled in bed, a baby in each arm, I should've been so happy, but instead I wanted to end my life. After months of terror, separated from my twins by COVID-19 restrictions, I believed my family would be better off without me.

Becoming a mum was always one of my life goals, and after Tom and I met in a pub in November 2011, we both knew that one day we wanted to have a family together.

I found out I was expecting twins at my 12-week scan in late 2019, and we were stunned but delighted. In January 2020, at 17 weeks pregnant, I learned that I had Selective Intrauterine Growth Restriction (sIUGR) type 2, which meant one of my identical twins had a smaller share of the placenta and was weaker than his brother. There was a 50/50 chance that both could die in the womb. As I broke down, I was offered a selective termination to save the bigger twin, but I couldn't make that decision and decided to place my hope in the doctors caring for us.

Many scans

For the next 11 weeks, I had multiple scans. Constantly worried, I was haunted by dark thoughts. When the pandemic hit, my anxiety rocketed. Staff were wearing PPE and it was so scary knowing that this virus was all around.

On 5 April 2020, the twins were born at 28 weeks by caesarean – Alexander weighing 2lb 7oz and George 1lb 15oz – after a scan revealed that George would otherwise likely die within 48 hours. After a quick glimpse, they were taken to the NICU. Tom had to leave immediately because of restrictions and I spent the night on the maternity ward, alone and distraught.

> 'I was expressing milk and crying'

Visiting the NICU was restricted to two hours a day, and Tom and I weren't allowed in together. After I was discharged, I spent the rest of the time at home, trying to express milk and crying. It was pure agony. With the country in lockdown and Tom and I strictly isolating, we were totally cut off from all our family and friends.

George and Alexander at eight weeks old

At home together at eight months

Intense flashbacks

Alexander was discharged on 1 June 2020, but George spent a further two months in hospital. By then, I was experiencing blackouts – days would go past and I'd have no recollection of what had happened – intense flashbacks and nightmares that the boys had died.

I would visit the neonatal unit every day to see George but I felt intense guilt that I had left Alexander and that my boys couldn't be together. Back at home, I sometimes struggled to make it out of bed. Tom, my mum and my mother-in-law looked after Alexander in rotation when I felt I couldn't. I felt so lonely, my isolation compounded by the restrictions of lockdown. I'd experienced anxiety and

WORDS: EIMEAR O'HAGAN, BESS BROWNING. SEE MORE AT INSTAGRAM @ALICE_AND_PIKELETS_SIUGR

> ‘It was painful to reflect on all the time we’d spent apart’

depression in the past, and I felt myself falling back into it. But my feelings became darker and I started to feel like everyone would be better off without me. I was suicidal.

After George finally came home in July 2020, I was referred for specialist trauma-focused CBT therapy. Even though by then the boys were home and doing well, I was so broken that I wanted to die. I was honest with Tom about how I was feeling. It was so hard for him to hear, but he was incredibly strong, telling me we would get through this together.

It took seven months of therapy before I stopped feeling suicidal and the nightmares and flashbacks subsided. After months of having to shut down my bonding instincts to survive being separated from the twins, I had to slowly open up again. It was wonderful to be with them 24/7, but also painful to reflect on all the time we’d spent apart, and the ‘new mum’ things I never got to experience.

Now, two energetic two-year-olds

Healing process

In May 2021, I was discharged by the NHS therapist, but decided to carry on paying privately. I’m still in therapy and remain on antidepressants. Today, Alexander and George are beautiful, energetic two-year-olds. When I see someone who has a child their age and is pregnant again, I can’t help but feel angry. Why did that have to happen to me?

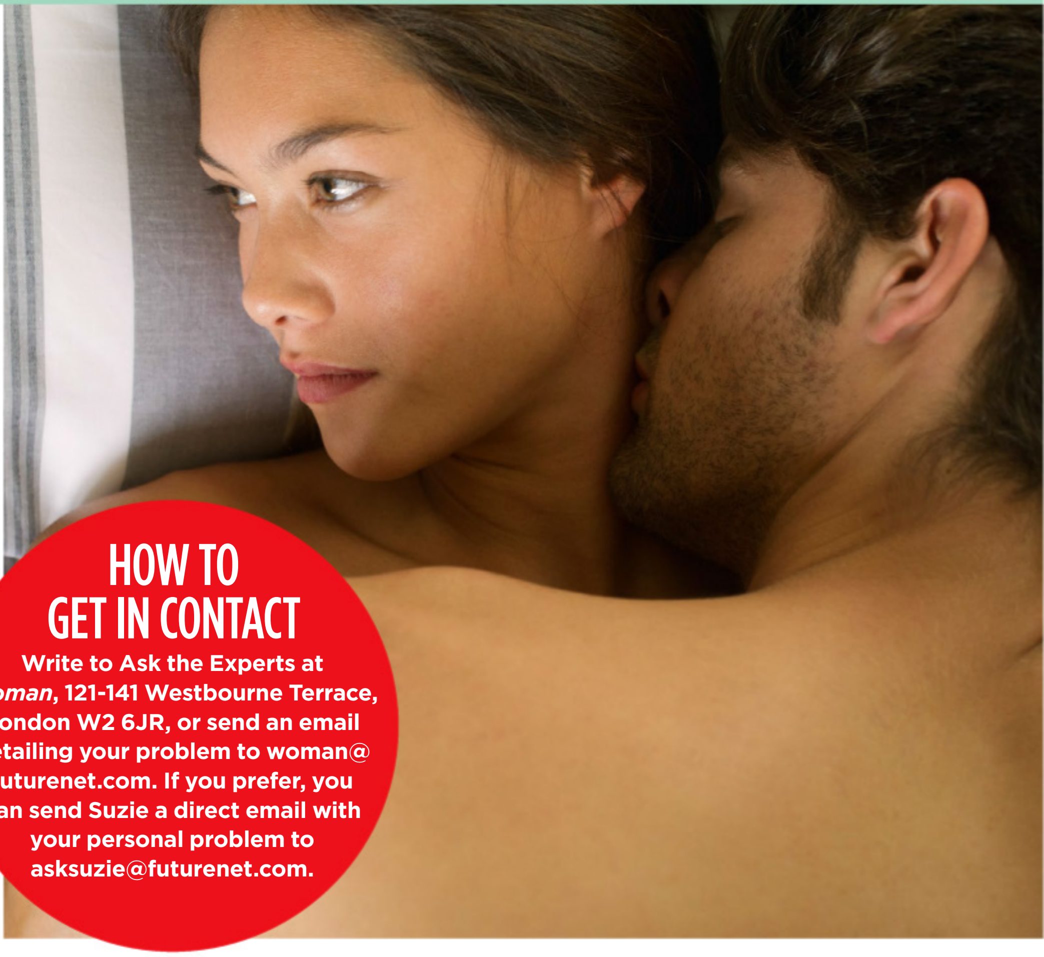
The experience was so brutal, I’m not sure I’ll ever fully recover, and I fear having another baby would risk terrible mental upheaval. Tom is supportive and doesn’t want me to endure anything like it ever again.

I’ve since started working for the Twins Trust, supporting other families of multiple births and bringing them together into our community. Helping others has been a huge part of my healing process. I can finally say I’m in the happiest place I’ve ever been.

Being with them is so rewarding

The experts

OUR TALENTED TEAM ARE HERE TO HELP SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS



HOW TO GET IN CONTACT

Write to Ask the Experts at *Woman*, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR, or send an email detailing your problem to woman@futurenet.com. If you prefer, you can send Suzie a direct email with your personal problem to asksuzie@futurenet.com.

Would one-night stands do me good?

Q My last relationship ended very badly – my partner had an affair and I only found out by accident. I'm wondering why he played away, and I've come to the conclusion that it was because I'm not attractive or lovable. Now my best friend has suggested I boost my ego by having one-night stands – it worked for her. I don't like the idea, but am I passing up a good way of getting my confidence back?

SUSAN SAYS

A Using casual sex to boost confidence has dangers. What if the lovemaking is awful? One-night stands often are – and could leave you feeling even worse about yourself. What if you fall for your fling, then get hurt all over again if he walks away? Your friend means well. But it'll be easier to recover from your break-up if the next sex you have is enjoyable and reliable. So build your confidence first, then find a lover.

Scared to have sex with new men

Q Dating again after being widowed, I'm meeting nice men and am now ready to have sex again. But having spent 25 years with my husband, I'm finding it difficult to imagine asking for what I want in the heat of the moment. I know what works for me – and my husband did, too. But how can I communicate that to someone new when we're both naked and already getting raunchy? I'd be so embarrassed.

SUSAN SAYS

A I wouldn't wait until you're naked and raunchy to talk about what you need in bed! I'd find a man who you feel relaxed with, one you trust and can talk to. Then, well before you make love, offer to tell him what you like and what you don't like. If he's not interested in these things, then walk away. If he's supportive and keen to learn, it'll be easy to tell him what he needs to know.

Can I let my granddaughter sleep with her boyfriend?

Q I have the most delightful granddaughter who is 16 and has been seeing a boy for almost a year. They are clearly head over heels about each other and I like him a lot. He's a very kind and caring young man. It is clear their relationship has become physical. They are coming to stay with me for half-term and I'd like to give them the offer I made my son when he brought his girlfriend home from university to stay – one bedroom or two?

SUZIE SAYS

A If she was 18 it would only be between you and her, but since there is a difference between a 16-year-old and one of 18 or over, as your son would have been, I'd have the discussion with her parents first. I agree that it's better to be open and honest about such things, and if they are already active it rather forces them to sneak around (as we did in my day!) if you insist on separate rooms. But you are right to make no assumptions. Clear it with her parents, and then make the offer.

SUZIE HAYMAN
Solves all your family dilemmas

SUSAN QUILLIAM
Sex, love and relationship expert

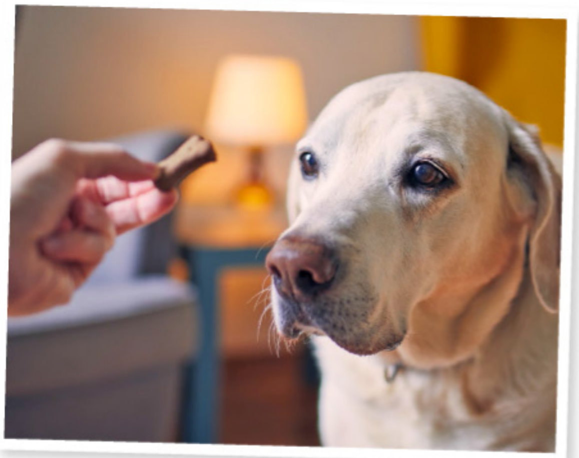
EMMA MARCHINGTON
Our vet helps you and your pet

JAMES WALKER
Scams expert and CEO, Rightly

KALPANA FITZPATRICK
Personal finance expert for themoneyedit.com

My dog needs a diet

Q My dog overindulged a bit over Christmas (as did I!). What's the best way to get him back to a healthy weight?



EMMA SAYS

A The first thing to check is whether your dog really is overweight. Has he visibly changed shape? If not, then you probably don't need to do anything drastic. Just go back to your old routine of walks and feeding and things will soon readjust. You can look up the average weight for your dog's age and breed, but these can only give you a ball-park figure. For a more accurate assessment, check his condition. You should be able to see the dog's waist – a clear distinction between chest and tummy. There should be some covering on the ribs, but you should be able to feel them, not just a layer of fat. If you aren't confident checking, your vet will be happy to do it for you. They may even run weight clinics where you can discuss a plan and book in follow-up appointments to monitor progress. If your dog does need a diet, weigh out his food carefully (don't just use scoops to measure), and cut out treats and snacks. Exercise is great but build up slowly to avoid injury; little and often is best.

THE LATEST SCAM

Q I'm trying to tighten my spending after Christmas, but I've recently moved house and need furniture. I've heard Facebook Marketplace is a good place to find bargains. But with all of the great deals, how can I work out which sellers are genuine and which are possible scammers?

JAMES SAYS

A As criminals can interact directly with you, Facebook Marketplace makes it easier to steal your money – so you are right to be cautious. Any offer that seems too good to be true, such as cheap designer clothes, branded furniture or deals on gaming consoles, likely is. Reading reviews can be a good way of identifying legitimate sellers. If you are pressured to pay in advance, quickly, or outside of Facebook – such as via a bank transfer – this is a red flag, and you should be wary. Facebook's purchase protection policies only cover payments made on Facebook. If you think you've been scammed, report it on Facebook.

MONEY MATTERS

Make savings with Kalpana's top tips...

BE ENERGY EFFICIENT

You may be wondering: is it more efficient (and cheaper) to leave the heating on low all day – or just switch it on when you need it? Well...

- According to the Energy Saving Trust, leaving the heating on all day can use more energy, as your home is always losing a certain amount of heat.
- However, if your house is well insulated, there is an argument for leaving the heating on low all day. Test it – if you can remain comfortable all day without the heating going on and off constantly, it may be the right move. Try keeping it on low one week and in the second week schedule it to come on twice a day. Keep tabs on cost using a smart meter or by checking your meter reading.
- The Energy Saving Trust stresses that, in the long run, only putting the heating on when you need it is best practice in keeping costs low.

Interest rates rise

Interest rates are at their highest in 14 years, with the Bank of England's base rate now at 3.5%*. If you're lucky enough to have cash savings, it's worth checking that you're getting the best return. Some banks are paying as much as 5%. Go to our sister site moneyweek.com/32213/the-best-savings-account to see the latest accounts.

DEAL OF THE WEEK

New customers at feelunique.com get 15% off with code NEW15. Offer ends 10 January 2023. T&Cs apply.

*GO TO BANKOFENGLAND.CO.UK TO SEE THE LATEST BASE RATE.

MAIN PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): ALAMY, GETTY. SUSAN QUILLIAM PHOTO: ANGELA SPAIN

Becoming the BREADWINNER

While men continue to be paid more than women, meet the couples bucking the trend

As the gender pay gap continues to rise, new research has found that, on average, women take home £564 less per month than men in 2022. And while we'd hoped things were improving, that figure is actually higher than the previous year. In April 2022, the gap was recorded at 8.3%, but in April 2021, it was 7.7%.

In many relationships, women find themselves on a lower income than their partner, whether they're juggling childcare or care for elderly parents or simply being paid less than the men in their workplace.

But for some couples, women are bringing home the biggest pay cheque.

'I WANT TO BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR MY DAUGHTER'

Frederike Harms, 40, is a senior director. She lives in Southampton with her partner Ben, 42, a self-employed electrical contractor, and their two-year-old daughter Harriet.

Ben and I met through work while I was a project manager and he was an electrical contractor. When we became a couple in January 2019, we were always honest about our finances.

I've never felt the need to be with someone earning the same as me, and while some men might find it difficult, Ben has always known how important my career is, and has supported me. I've always had a strong work ethic, starting my first job aged 14 at my parents' bakery every Saturday. Then I got a job as a waitress, saving enough to buy my first car. I was also taught that if I wanted anything, I had to earn it.

When our daughter Harriet was born in August 2020, we agreed that I would cover the childcare costs and we continued splitting the household bills.

I know Ben would like to – and could – earn more, but he made a conscious choice to be at home with Harriet instead of being away on work projects. If I'm working from home, I take her to nursery, while Ben does pick-ups.

I want to be a positive role model for my daughter. I want her to see she can be and do what she wants, but it's important she sees it's hard work. When I'm working, I'd obviously much rather be spending time with Harriet, but I want to inspire her, and earn money so that I can show her the world and give her opportunities.

Addressing the gender pay gap can be uncomfortable but it's important to highlight. I know there are men I've worked with in the past, in the same role as me but on a higher pay grade. It's frustrating, but I've learnt not to play down my accomplishments or to question what I bring to the table.

FREDERIKE'S SALARY: £120,000
BEN'S SALARY: £50,000

Ben has chosen to be at home with Harriet

BEN SAYS: 'Previously, I earned double what I do now, but I spent most of the week working away, and since meeting Frederike and having Harriet, I've chosen to do things differently. Now, I take on local contracts so I can be at home with my family, as it's something I didn't want to miss out on. We have a strong family unit and I get to enjoy quality time with my partner and daughter.'

NATASHA'S SALARY: £50,000
PAUL'S SALARY: £10,000

'HE DOES THE HOUSEWORK AND LOOKS AFTER THE KIDS'

Writer and yoga teacher Natasha Harding, 46, lives in Bude, Cornwall, with her husband Paul, 51, who runs a wholesale company, and their two children Zak, 16, and Lexi, nine.

My career has always been important to me and the fact that I've got two children hasn't made me less ambitious. I've worked as a freelance journalist and yoga teacher for 16 years – setting up my yoga business when Zak was 12 weeks old. For years, Paul and I earned similar amounts but then my money started to accelerate.

When Lexi was born in 2013, we decided that I would continue to focus on my job and I didn't take any maternity leave – I was even working on the day I gave birth to her. Once she was born, Paul set up a wholesale company and looked after Lexi as well as doing the cooking and the majority of the housework.

> 'I was even working on the day I gave birth'

He's always taken the kids to school and picked them up and he cycles in with Lexi most mornings, which I love to see. He knows all her teachers at school. In fact they call me the 'enigma' as they rarely see me.

I think we set really good role models for the kids. They see their dad cook and clean the house and they know not to come into the office when I'm on a deadline. They've never interrupted a work call and accept me working as much as I do – because Paul is around if they need anything.

I don't even think about the fact I earn more. Money isn't an issue with us because we both pull our weight. I wouldn't have been able to achieve everything I have without Paul's support.

PAUL SAYS: 'I couldn't be prouder of Natasha and earning less than her doesn't cause me to lose sleep at night. We have a very good life, because of her.

When I was younger I had a very stressful job working in mobile phone corporate sales. I set up a wholesale company, based from home, meaning I could help out more. I think we've got a really balanced life and I think we support each other really well.' →

'IF OUR ROLES REVERSED, HE'D SUPPORT ME'

April West, 34, works in marketing and lives in Biggleswade with her partner Terry, 37, who owns two businesses.

While I pay the lion's share of household expenses for the home I share with Terry, I don't really worry about our finances. I make more than double Terry's income, but that's because he quit his job to set up a business.

APRIL'S SALARY: £49,000
TERRY'S SALARY: £20,000

When we met, in January 2021, Terry worked for an e-commerce platform and our salaries were almost the same at around £40,000. A few months later, he decided to set up a cryptocurrency business on the side with a friend. We knew it was unpredictable and we talked about the possible risks, but Terry was in a financially stable situation and we don't have children to consider.

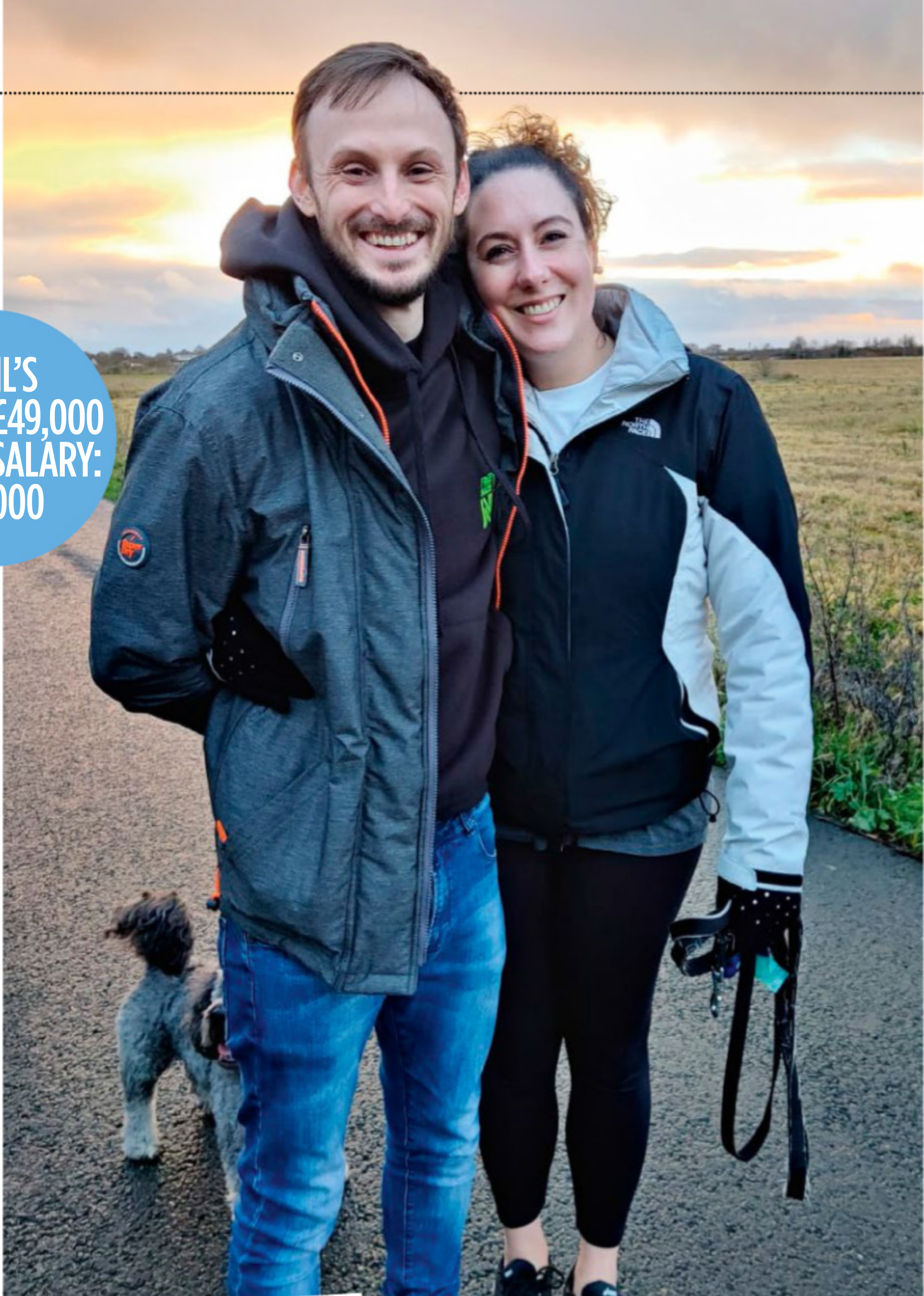
But in February 2022, I lost my job, and in May, the cryptocurrency market crashed. It was a stressful period for us both. But a couple of months later, I found a new job in marketing, and Terry and his friend set up a commercial safety flooring business.

'We don't have children to consider'

Although Terry's income has taken a hit and mine is steadier again, we've been through enough to know that anything can happen. And even though he earns less than me, I see the hours he puts in. While I work five days a week, from 9am to 5pm, Terry can work 14-hour days.

I work predominantly with women now, but in the past, I worked with a man who told me he was making £8,000 more than me, despite the fact that I had more experience. I was horrified.

Terry and I are very much a team, and our relationship is a partnership, so I know that if our roles were reversed in the future, he'd support me.



April and Terry are very much a team

TERRY SAYS: **'It's not strange to me that April is the breadwinner. In fact, it provides a sense of security, especially with the way the world is at the moment. My wage fluctuates month by month, so it helps.**

I still would have set up my business if I hadn't met April, but it would definitely have been more difficult, and maybe I would have needed to find a part-time job.

Her support means I can put any money I make back into my business, rather than having to worry about squirrelling it away. It's definitely eased the burden, and we make a great team.'

WORDS: MISHAAL KHAN, NATASHA HARDING

woman

Your LIFE

Recipes | Homes & gardens | Travel

HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

HEALTHY *fakeaways*

Pinch of Nom have worked their magic on these classic dinners, making them much healthier than the takeaway equivalents.

Cheesy nacho burger

These loaded burgers have got everything you're craving, so there's no need to reach for the takeaway menu.

SERVES 4 PREP 20 MINS
COOK 12 MINS

- 40g lightly-salted tortilla chips
- 40g reduced-fat Cheddar cheese, finely grated
- Low-calorie cooking spray
- ½ red pepper, deseeded and finely sliced
- ½ green pepper, deseeded and finely sliced
- 4 reduced-fat processed cheese slices
- 4 wholemeal rolls, about 60g each, sliced in half
- 30g sliced jalapeño peppers, drained, from a jar
- 2tbsp light mayonnaise
- ½tsp sriracha sauce

For the burgers:

- 250g 5%-fat minced beef
- ½tsp smoked paprika
- ½tsp chilli powder
- ¼tsp garlic granules
- ¼tsp onion granules
- ¼tsp ground cumin
- ¼tsp dried oregano

FOOD ED'S TIP
Swap the beef for 5%-fat minced lamb or turkey, or try a plant-based version if you're veggie.

(continues over)

(continued)

For the guacamole:

- **½ avocado, stone and skin removed, mashed with a fork**
- **3 cherry tomatoes, diced**
- **1 spring onion, trimmed and finely sliced**
- **1tsp lime juice**
- **¼tsp sriracha sauce**

1 In a large mixing bowl, add all the burger ingredients and mix together with your hands until the herbs and spices are fully incorporated. Divide the mixture into 4 patties and leave to one side.

2 Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper and make four small stacks of tortilla chips. Top with the grated cheese and pop under a hot grill for 1 min until the cheese is melted. Leave to one side.

3 Spray a small frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the peppers and cook for 8 mins until softened and starting to brown.

4 Meanwhile, spray a large frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray over a medium heat. Add the burgers and fry for 4-5 mins on each side. Turn off the heat and add a slice of cheese to the top of each burger. Leave to one side to melt.

5 In a small bowl, combine the guacamole ingredients, until smooth and season. Spread a little guacamole on the bottom half of each roll. Add a burger patty and top with a few of the peppers. Add a stack of the tortilla chips on top of the peppers, and finish with a few jalapeños.

6 Mix the mayonnaise and sriracha sauce together, drizzle over the top of the burger stack and top with the other half of the roll.

Per serving: 471 cals, 23g fat, 8g sat fat, 35g carbs

FOOD ED'S TIP
Heating the tortillas makes it easier to fold and roll the finished wrap.

Peri-peri chicken wraps

We love a cheeky Nando's but our peri-peri chicken is one of our go-to orders and it's better for your budget and your calorie count.

SERVES 2 PREP 10 MINS
COOK 10 MINS

For the wrap:

- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **1 medium chicken breast, sliced**
- **2tsp peri-peri seasoning**
- **20g red pepper, deseeded and finely sliced**
- **2 low-calorie soft tortilla wraps**
- **50g lettuce, shredded**
- **Half a cucumber, sliced into ribbons**
- **2 cherry tomatoes, quartered**
- **2tsp light mayonnaise**

For the chilli jam:

- **½ red chilli, seeds removed and finely diced**
- **2tbsp honey**
- **2tsp reduced-sugar ketchup**
- **1tsp cider vinegar**
- **1tsp granulated sweetener**
- **¼tsp chilli powder**
- **¼tsp smoked paprika**

1 Add the chilli jam ingredients to a small saucepan and place over a very low heat. Heat for 4 mins, until just bubbling and thick. Leave it to one side to cool and thicken.

2 Spray a frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the chicken and sprinkle over the peri-peri seasoning. Fry the chicken for 5 mins, then add the sliced pepper and fry for a further 3 mins. Check the chicken by slicing into a piece and checking there is no pinkness.

3 Heat the tortilla wraps for 60 seconds in the microwave and spread the chilli jam over the two tortillas. Spoon the chicken into the centre of the wrap and add the lettuce, cucumber and tomatoes. Drizzle over the mayonnaise. Fold the top and bottom of the wrap into the centre of the wrap, and then roll up from one edge to enclose the filling.

Per serving: 356 cals, 6g fat, 2g sat fat, 51g carbs

FOOD ED'S TIP
Swap the chicken for any other ready-cooked chicken such as peri-peri or BBQ chicken slices. If you prefer, use shop-bought naan bread.

Chicken tikka 'naanwich'

If you're bored of the same old lunches, this is guaranteed to spice up your midday meal!

SERVES 4 PREP 20 MINS COOK 10 MINS

- **200g ready-cooked chicken tikka slices**
- **20g baby spinach leaves**

For the naan bread:

- **250g white self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting**
- **1tsp caster sugar**
- **½tsp salt**
- **½tsp baking powder**
- **250g fat-free natural yogurt**
- **10g reduced-fat spread, melted plus a little extra for greasing**

For the raita:

- **125g fat-free natural yogurt**
- **80g cucumber, very finely chopped**
- **4g fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped**
- **4g fresh mint leaves, finely chopped**
- **1 small garlic clove, peeled and crushed**

1 For the naan bread, sift the flour, sugar, salt and baking powder into a medium mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the yogurt. Gradually draw in the flour, mixing with your fingertips to form a ball of soft dough. Knead for 5 mins until you have a smooth ball. Place in a lightly-greased bowl, cover, set aside for 10 mins.

2 Heat the oven to 180C Fan/Gas 6. Turn the dough out onto a lightly-floured surface and cut into four pieces. If the dough is sticky, dust with a little more flour. Shape into 4 oval-shaped balls, then roll out to 11 x 22cm. Place on 2 lightly-greased baking trays and prick with a fork.

3 Bake for 8 mins until golden and puffy. Brush with low-fat spread and leave to cool.

4 Combine all the raita ingredients in a small bowl and mix. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Split one side of each naan bread open using a small serrated knife. Fill each naan bread with some of the cooked chicken tikka slices, baby spinach leaves and the raita. Serve at once.

Per serving: 375cals, 3.5g fat, 1g sat fat, 59g carbs

Recipes adapted from: *Pinch of Nom: Enjoy* by Kate & Kay Allinson (£20, Bluebird)

100
Pinch of Nom
ENJOY
Kate & Kay Allinson

COMPILED BY: ROSE FOOKS. RECIPES AND PHOTOS EXTRACTED FROM: *PINCH OF NOM: ENJOY*, BY KATE AND KAY ALLINSON, (£20, BLUEBIRD)

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Luxe FOR LESS

Create a glam bedroom on a budget, just like these Instagrammers

@ATHOMEWITHNUMBER49

A four-poster bed adds a touch of luxury

Clay poster, from £15.95 (without frame), Dan Hobday at desenio.co.uk

Throw, £29.50, M&S

Black velvet cushion, £8, George Home

Get the look

✱ Use a monochrome palette with touches of warm brass metallics for a luxurious look.

✱ Keep lines sharp, using a four-poster to frame your sleep space and echoing the same angles through black framed prints and a blocky bedside table.

✱ Try to tidy away any clutter that accumulates on a bedside table. Drawer styles are perfect for squirrelling away day-to-day items.

✱ Add interest to a two-tone colour palette with plenty of texture through velvet and bouclé fabric furnishings.

Get the look

✱ Stick to a Scandi look, with natural wooden elements and a stripped-back colour scheme.

✱ Layer bed linen, with textured bedding sets, quilted covers and woven throws.

✱ Upholstered beds look and feel luxurious, but they can be quite expensive. Opt for a simple headboard to create the same look at a fraction of the cost.

✱ Little touches make a big difference – a vase of greenery and a diffuser with a relaxing scent can easily elevate a space.

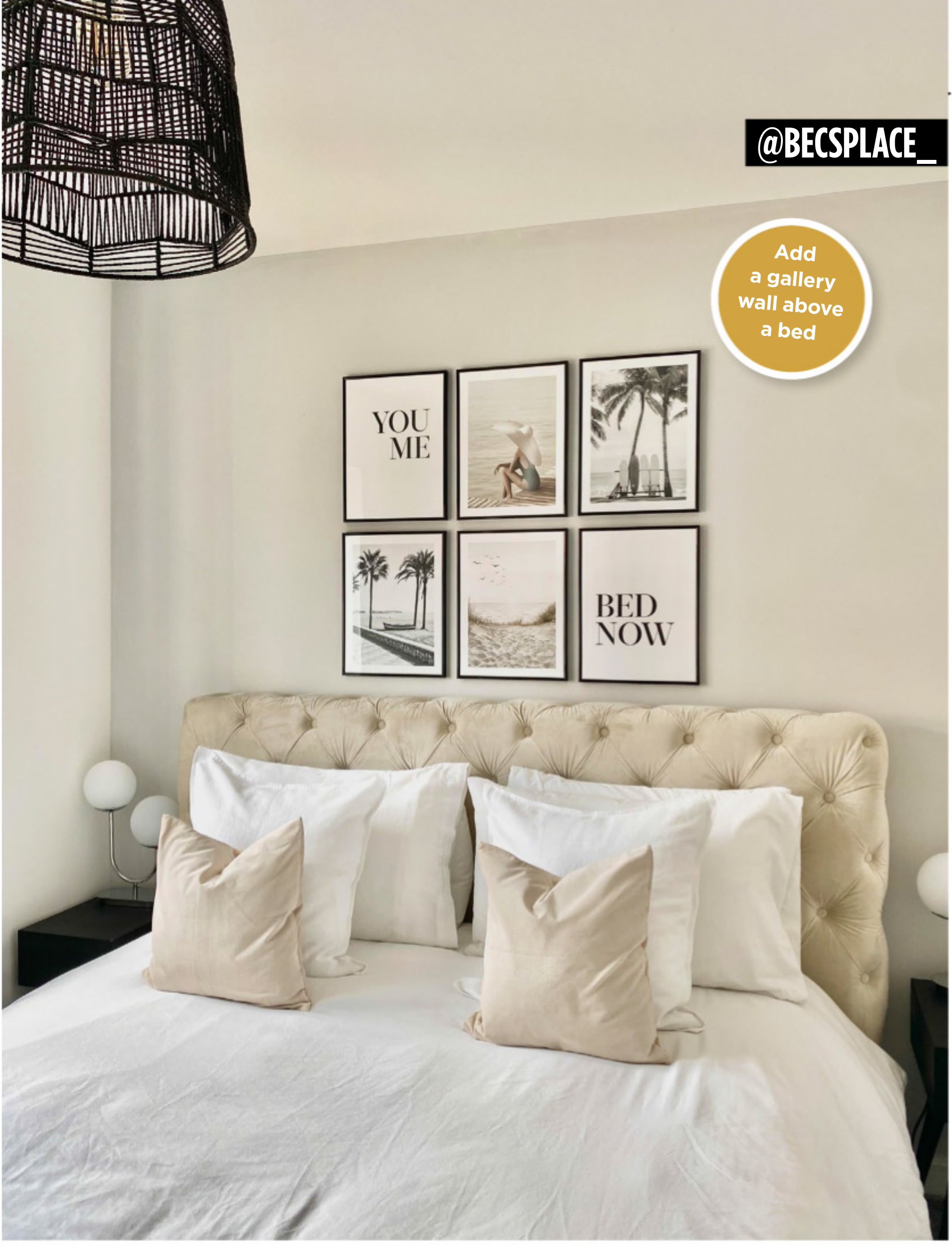
Mirror, £9, Matalan

Wooden frame lamp, £14, Primark

Woven tray, £9, George Home

@OURHOUSEINLONDON

Muted colour schemes look chic



@BECSPLACE_

Add a gallery wall above a bed

Get the look

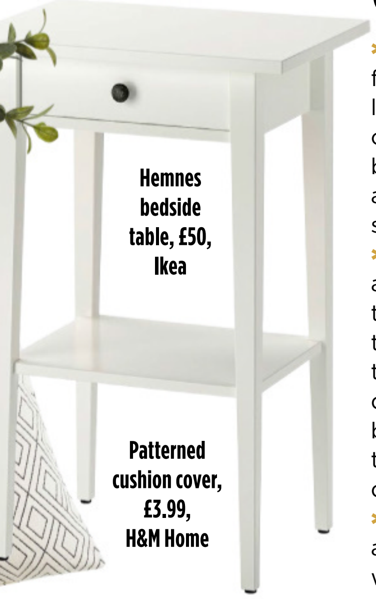
- ✱ With a tonal cream scheme, add cool chrome and silver elements to break up the beige.
- ✱ Create the look of a luxury hotel by stacking pillows and cushions of varying sizes and styles, finishing with an accent cushion at the front with a 'karate chop' dent in the centre.
- ✱ Arrange a set of similar black and white prints in a grid-like formation for a minimal take on the trendy gallery wall.

Dacite black pendant ceiling light, £25, B&Q

Patterned double bedding set, £39.99, H&M Home

Rope basket, £15, Matalan

Faux plant pot, £20, Next

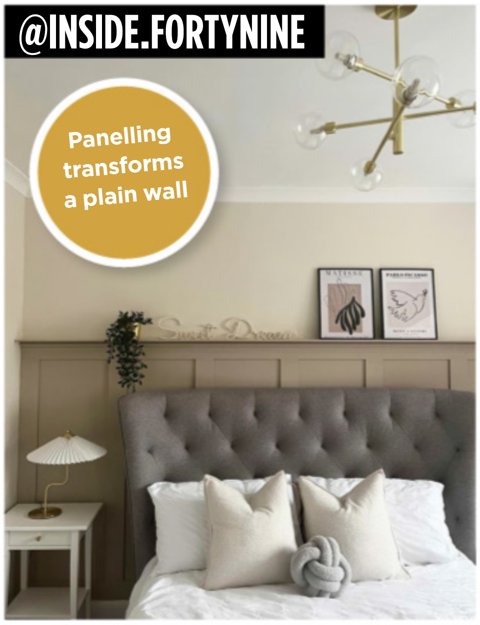


Hemnes bedside table, £50, Ikea

Patterned cushion cover, £3.99, H&M Home

Get the look

- ✱ Swap a simple ceiling shade for an opulent light fitting, like a Sputnik style or a chandelier. Think outside the box when choosing lamps as well – search for unusual styles that look designer.
- ✱ Make a feature wall with a strip of panelling behind the bed. Painted in a deeper tone than the rest of the walls, this inexpensive design trick doubles as a headboard if your bed doesn't have one. Add a thin picture ledge to the top for displaying prints and plants.
- ✱ Brilliant white walls can look a little harsh, so switch to an off-white shade to soften the effect.



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Panelling transforms a plain wall

WORDS: ESME CLEMO. PHOTOS: @ATHOMEWITHNUMBER49, @OURHOUSEINLONDON, @BECSPLACE_, @INSIDE.FORTYNINE

BRAVERY
IN BEING
SOFT.
LES COURBES
LA COLLECTION D'ART MODERNE
LE JARDIN
de l'artiste à Avignon

Picture PERFECT

Perk up a plain wall with these bold prints, whatever your budget

£10 AND UNDER

Multicoloured oil canvas, £6, Primark

Chaos typograph poster, £4.50, AlbertMoon at etsy.com

TEQUILA
COINTREAU
LIME
JUICE

Margarita cocktail poster, from £7.50, irisoccasions.co.uk

Macramé wall hanging, £6, Primark

La Lune framed print, £8, Habitat

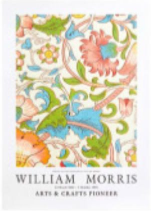
Figurine framed canvas, £7, B&M

Enchanted print (without frame), £6.50, Habitat

White flower poster, £8.99, H&M Home

£20 AND UNDER

Palm print canvas, £12, George Home



William Morris poster, £19.99, H&M Home

Blue geometric no2 poster, £13.95, desenio.co.uk

Botanical print (without frame), £12.95, aureous.co

Hovsta framed vintage flower posters, £19 for two, Ikea

Dan Hobday Land Ahoy no1 poster, £15.95, desenio.co.uk

Leaf embroidered framed art, £12, Primark

Floral framed canvas, £17, Matalan

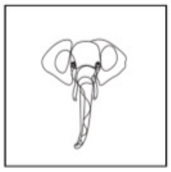
£30 AND UNDER

Pink banana leaves print (without frame), £23, greenlili.com

Abigail Ahern seagrass circle wall art, £25, freemans.com

Love rainbow print (without frame), £21, iamfy.co

Seaweed print (without frame), £30, beachhouseart.co.uk



Wire elephant, £22, Dunelm

Portofino painting print (without frame), £23, iamfy.co

Black metal wall art, £28, Matalan

Zigazigah print (without frame), £25, laredoute.co.uk

COMPILED BY: ESME CLEMO. MAIN IMAGE: PRINTS (WITHOUT FRAMES), FROM £5.45 EACH, ALL DESENIO.CO.UK

Feel-good BREAKS

FOR A Euro escape

There's perhaps nothing more feel-good than a break in the sun. From June 2023, the picturesque Greek island of Santorini is going to be closer for anyone living near Derby and Nottingham, as operator Jet2 launches new flights from East Midlands airport. The airline lets you book package holidays to the sun-soaked isle for just £60pp. You'll get all the sunshine, volcanic beaches and tavernas pouring ouzo that you could have dreamed of, and as a relative bargain. **Jet2.com**

This year, book a holiday that puts you first. We've rounded up the hottest new getaways for 2023

FOR Nature enthusiasts

If it's a beautiful garden that really floats your boat, head for Cornwall. At grade II-listed Glendurgan, a 19th-century cherry laurel hedge maze has just undergone a four-year restoration. Lose yourself along its squiggly white stone paths, then enjoy the greenery further by wandering around the orchard or weaving past rows of flowers. There's home-made cake waiting for you in the tea room at the end of the walk, too. **nationaltrust.org.uk**

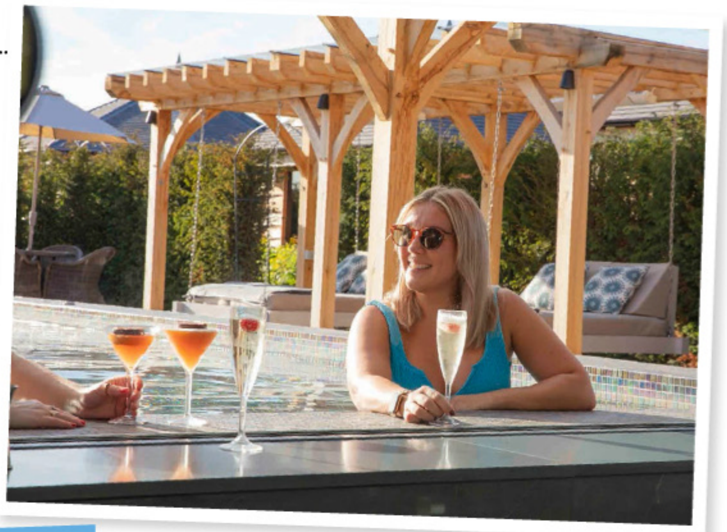
FOR A city break

The travel experts at Lonely Planet recently announced their top places in the world to visit in 2023 – and Manchester was the only UK city to make the list. They pointed to the rich cultural scene and, given the raft of new openings to come this year, it's a fair point. In the spring the Manchester Museum will reopen after a refurb and the new Factory International building will open to host a variety of art, music and dance. Even if you've been before, you'll find something new to make you smile.

FOR Spa fans

The city of Bath is famous for its ancient Roman Baths and mineral-rich waters. And from 7-26 February a brand new festival, ReBalance Bath, will bring together the city's spas, wellness hotels, therapists and more for three weeks of focus on wellbeing. Sign up for laughter yoga and cold water therapy, guided meditation and sound baths. And, of course, don't forget to go for a dip in the city's hot pools at Thermae Bath Spa. **welcometobath.co.uk/rebalance-bath**

WORDS: ALICIA MILLER. MAIN PHOTO: GETTY



FOR A detox-retox

If you thought swim-up bars were only for tropical island holidays, think again – the UK's first has opened in the Manor House Hotel in Alsager, Cheshire. The heated vitality pool, where you can order bubbly or cocktails, is part of a luxe new spa that opened at the property at the end of 2022. Enjoy views over the surrounding gardens, then pop into a herbal sauna or a salt steam inhalation chamber – great for blissed-out calm. **manorhousealsager.com**

FOR Pet lovers

If you're a dog owner, you'll know that nothing feels better than time spent with your pup. And the new Bike & Boot hotel in the Peak District is the perfect place to do it. It claims to be one of the most dog-friendly hotels in the world, where canines are allowed to roam free. You'll also get freebies galore, such as hot drinks and cinema club, and storage areas for bikes. The design is funky and there's a cool restaurant and bar on site as well. **bikeandboot.com**

FOR History with a twist

Does your idea of a good time involve having a delicious drink in hand? Opening in Wooler, Northumberland this spring, brand new Ad Gefrin combines an Anglo-Saxon history museum with something unexpected – a whisky distillery. Step back more than 1,000 years, learning about Northumbrian kings and queens from original artefacts and see craft demonstrations. Then sample their artisan single malt whisky, made from barley harvested by local farmers. It's not just Scotland that can make a mean dram! **adgefrin.co.uk**

✱ Always check the latest travel advice before booking a trip

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Hotel Cappelli, Montecatini Terme

The 3 star Hotel Cappelli is well located in Montecatini Terme, close to the thermal spa and within comfortable walking distance of the resort centre. The facilities in this modern, family owned hotel include a restaurant, lounge bar and outside terrace with tables and chairs. Free wi-fi is available in the public areas. All of the Cappelli's comfortable bedrooms are air-conditioned and have an en-suite bathroom, hairdryer, telephone and TV. The hotel's restaurant serves traditional Italian and international cuisine.

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CROSSWORD & STARS

Put your feet up and have a go at this week's puzzle

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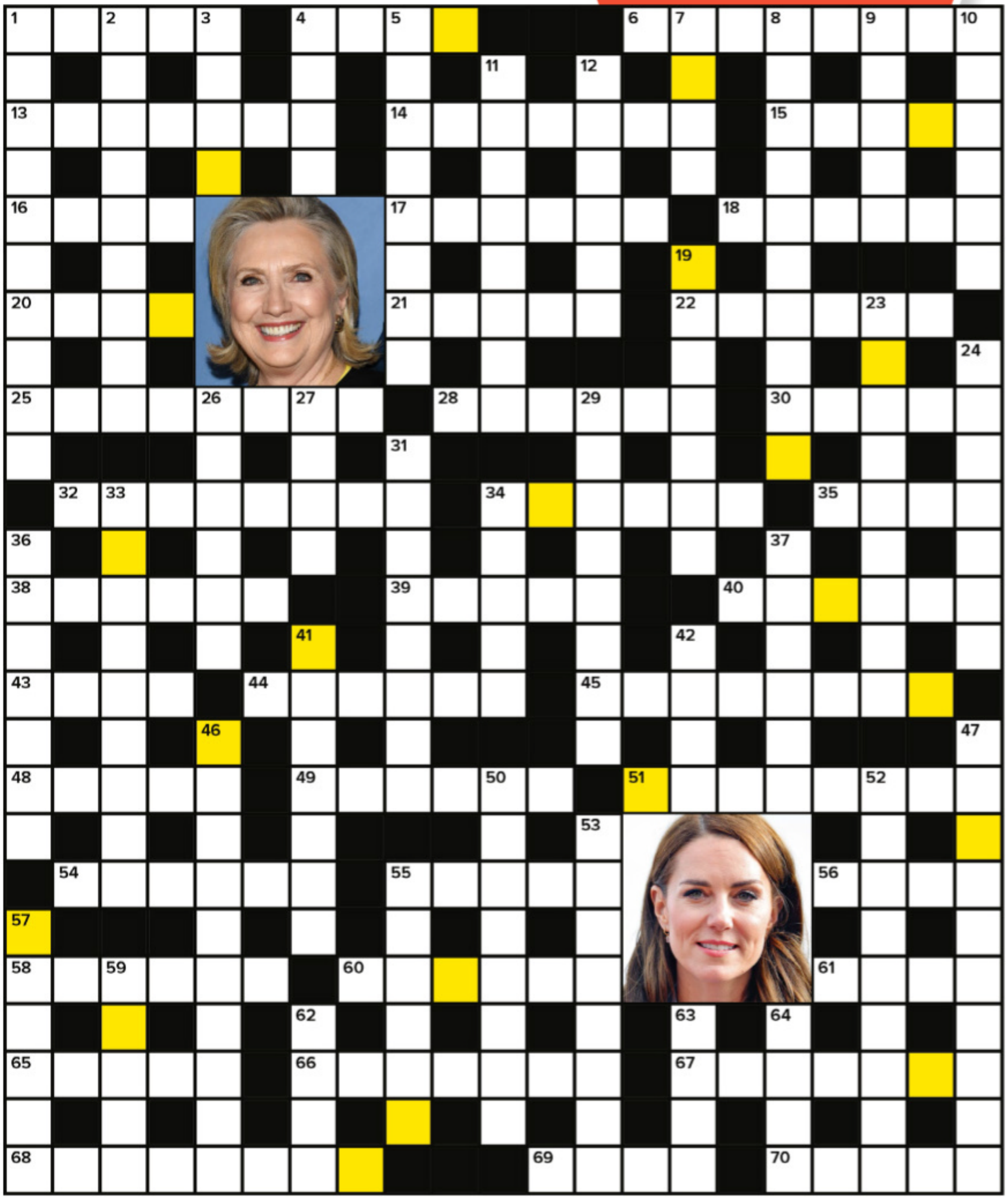
What do Hillary Clinton and Catherine, Princess of Wales, have in common? To find out, solve the crossword then read down the shaded squares to find the four-word answer.

ACROSS

1 Picture (5)
4 Elevated (4)
6 Subatomic particle (8)
13 Lessons (7)
14 Empowered (7)
15 Inexperienced (5)
16 Level and regular (4)
17 Autographed (6)
18 Harsh, strict (6)
20 Casserole (4)
21 Courage (5)
22 Customs (6)
25 Common atmospheric gas (8)
28 Drink made from beans (6)
30 Take it easy (5)
32 Range of colours (8)
34 Wealthy, informally (6)
35 Percussion instrument (4)
38 Mistakes (6)
39 Arrive at (5)
40 Relating to teeth (6)
43 Reflected sound (4)
44 Type of dance (6)
45 Prepare for a performance (8)
48 The matter at hand (5)
49 Part of a tree (6)
51 Handheld firework (8)
54 Combining (6)
55 Person (5)
56 Second-hand (4)
58 Property (6)
60 Spatter liquid (6)
61 Writing tools (4)
65 Frequently (5)
66 Boss of a football team (7)
67 Endurance (7)
68 Basic constituent parts (8)
69 Notion (4)
70 Stiff (5)



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DOWN

1 Getting bigger in size or number (10)
2 Great surprise (9)
3 Lack of difficulty (4)
4 Garden appliance (4)
5 Estimating (8)
7 Titled woman (4)
8 City in Kent (10)
9 Lift up (5)
10 Required (6)
11 Australian animal (8)
12 Shirt or jacket part (6)
19 Robbers (7)
23 Puts up with (9)
24 Specimen (7)
26 Takes place (6)
27 Merit, deserve (4)
29 Plumage (8)
31 Protection from rain (8)
33 Bought (9)
34 Smallest amount (5)
36 Advantage (7)
37 Mend (6)
41 Rubbish (7)
42 Sea-going vessel (4)
46 Opposition (10)
47 Wedding attendant (10)
50 Crusade (8)
52 Perceiving sound (9)
53 Moored (8)
55 Being optimistic (6)
57 Turn into (6)
59 Name of a book (5)
62 Leave out (4)
63 Continent of China and India (4)
64 Just, impartial (4)

ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Image 4 High 6 Electron 13 Classes 14 Enabled 15 Naive 16 Even 17 Signed 18 Severe 20 Stew 21 Nerve 22 Habits 25 Nitrogen 28 Coffee 30 Relax 32 Spectrum 34 Loaded 35 Drum 38 Errors 39 Reach 40 Dental 43 Echo 44 Ballet 45 Rehearse 48 Issue 49 Branch 51 Sparkler 54 Adding 55 Human 56 Used 58 Estate 60 Splash 61 Pens 65 Often 66 Manager 67 Stamina 68 Elements 69 Idea 70 Rigid

DOWN: 1 Increasing 2 Amazement 3 Ease 4 Hose 5 Guessing 7 Lady 8 Canterbury 9 Raise 10 Needed 11 Kangaroo 12 Sleeve 19 Thieves 23 Tolerates 24 Example 26 Occurs 27 Earn 29 Feathers 31 Umbrella 33 Purchased 34 Least 36 Benefit 37 Repair 41 Garbage 42 Ship 46 Resistance 47 Bridesmaid 50 Campaign 52 Listening 53 Anchored 55 Hoping 57 Become 59 Title 62 Omit 63 Asia 64 Fair

SOLUTION:
HAVE TWO YOUNGER SIBLINGS

Recycle

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Starscope

YOUR STARS FOR 3–9 JANUARY BY PENNY THORNTON

ARIES 21 Mar – 20 Apr

Remember the tortoise and the hare? Speeding along at the rate of knots will be counterproductive. So start as you mean to go on and take your time. With everything.

For your reading ☎09058 172557

TAURUS 21 Apr – 21 May

Travel continues to have its share of irritations, especially if you have a journey on Friday. Expect to be delayed and diverted. The weekend has a surprise up its sleeve.

For your reading ☎09058 172558

GEMINI 22 May – 22 Jun

It's OK to delay a meeting or to ask for extra time. Better to have all the information you need and know absolutely how you feel. You're not the only one with questions.

For your reading ☎09058 172559

CANCER 23 Jun – 23 Jul

Friday's full moon is in your sign, bringing to an end a six-month chapter. A relationship is at a critical point. You're either in it for the long-term, or you're not…

For your reading ☎09058 172560

LEO 24 Jul – 23 Aug

Trying to get ahead of the game on a retrograde Mercury is asking for trouble. People you need are off the radar and information has gone missing. Be patient.

For your reading ☎09058 172561

VIRGO 24 Aug – 23 Sep

A gestation period is at an end and a new production is about to begin. Babies aside, early January is pregnant with possibility. So give your creative spirit full rein.

For your reading ☎09058 172562

LIBRA 24 Sep – 23 Oct

If you find yourself thinking you need to move, a clean-up job and a pot of paint might actually change your mind. You're looking at the view with jaundiced eyes.

For your reading ☎09058 172563

SCORPIO 24 Oct – 22 Nov

Staying close to home is advised. Travel delays are in the stars, as are communication blips. Ask yourself: do you really need to make that journey or have that conversation?

For your reading ☎09058 172564

SAGITTARIUS 23 Nov – 21 Dec

It's probably not the best time to try to get a deal done. Chances are something's being lost in translation, and information is unreliable at best and misleading at worst.

For your reading ☎09058 172565

CAPRICORN 22 Dec – 20 Jan

On the 6th, you could be throwing out more than the Christmas tree. Start the new year with a clean slate and be philosophical about what's no longer fit for purpose.

For your reading ☎09058 172566

AQUARIUS 21 Jan – 19 Feb

Lovely Venus arrives in your sign, helping to get 2023 off to a great start. Romance is in the air, bridges can be built and fences mended. Enjoy your beautiful stars.

For your reading ☎09058 172567

PISCES 20 Feb – 20 Mar

Avoid reading too much into situations. Until Mercury gets back on track on the 18th, you cannot be sure what's for real and what was just a great idea at the time.

For your reading ☎09058 172568

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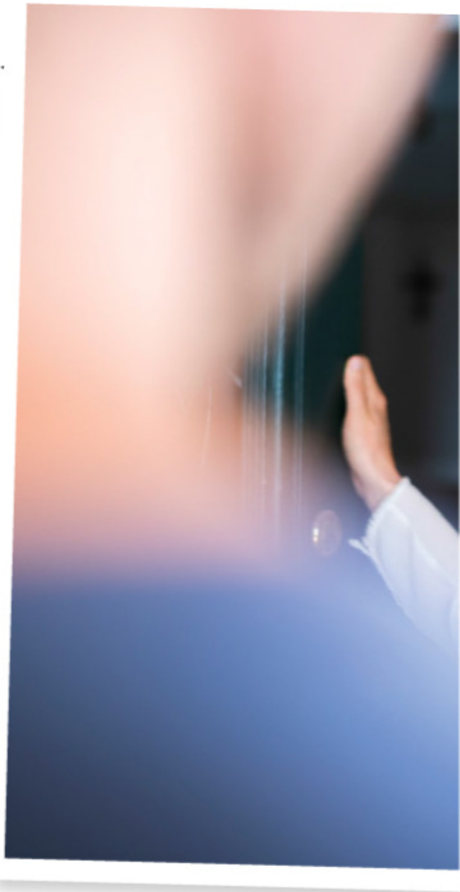
LOVE is the word

Alison's new neighbour was gorgeous, but she suspected he had a secret



It's almost time to go. Jackie has poured us all a stiff drink to steady our nerves and Stella has been at the window looking out for the car that will take us to the church.

Last time we went to the church was to say our goodbyes to Diane, who used to live in number four.

'Is anyone else nervous?' Stella asks.

We nod. Who'd have thought a year ago we'd be doing this?

*****

Number four had stood empty for ages after Diane died. My neighbours Stella and Jackie and I were all surprised when a sold sign finally went up.

A few weeks later, we gathered on Jackie's front lawn to watch as a removal lorry was unloaded.

'Have you seen the new people?' Stella asked.

'Only removal men so far,' Jackie said.

'Wow! Look at that desk!'

We all fell silent as a handsome wooden desk (carried by two equally handsome men) was taken in. It was a thing of beauty, the wood gleaming in the sun.

'Gorgeous!' Stella whispered.

'Oak?' I asked.

'No idea, Alison,' Stella said. 'I was talking about the movers.'

We all turned to look at Stella, and she flushed.

Just down the road, nestling at the kerb, was a chic, bright blue sports car, all low slung and oozing power.

'Ding dong!' Jackie said.

'Who drives a car like that?' Stella asked.

'She's probably blonde,' I said, jumping to conclusions.

'Tall and slim,' Jackie added.

And so we began to paint a picture of the glamorous newbie that was moving into Diane's bungalow.

'Divorcée,' Jackie suggested.

'Wealthy widow of an older man?' Stella wondered aloud.

'Why should it have anything to do with a man?' I sniffed. 'All I have, I earned myself.'

Jackie muttered something about someone letting the social justice warrior out of her cage, but I ignored it.

As we turned back towards number four, I saw one of the removal men carrying in a large box with *Books* written on the side. He had impressive muscles.

'That looks heavy,' I said.

'Weighs a ton,' he said, and hurried in.

'He can come round and move my books any day,' Jackie said.

> My face felt as if it was on fire

Then they all turned to look at me. My face felt as if it was on fire. That removal man was gorgeous.

'Everything all right, Alison?' Stella asked.

'You seem to be blushing,' Jackie added.

It was likely to have something to do with his deep blue eyes and that warm smile.

*****

Later, our new neighbour rang Jackie's bell. Not that I was keeping an eye out or anything, but it was he of the deep blue eyes.

Jackie opened her door and I thought she was going to fall over. Then she ushered him inside, looking round cautiously, before closing the door.

Feeling worried for my friend, I sped across the road, only to bump into Stella, who suggested that we find out what was going on.

Jackie looked more than slightly annoyed as she led us through to her conservatory.

'This is William,' she said. 'He's my new neighbour. We were just having a glass of wine.'

She was being very proprietorial all of a sudden.

'Shall I get more glasses?' Stella asked.

William stood up. He looked smart in a blue checked shirt and jeans with his dark hair slightly damp. He was slim, but muscular.

'We met earlier,' he said, with the sort of smile that makes your stomach flip. 'I was carrying a box of books.'

'Were you?' I said airily. 'I didn't notice…'

Jackie perched on the arm of a chair, leg swinging, while Stella sat opposite, twirling a strand of hair around her finger.

Honestly, what were they like? If this was what love and romance did to you, I was glad I'd abstained all these years. I've always been happy being single, no serious commitments.

'I'm having a dinner party in a couple of weeks,' William said. 'You're all invited. Hopefully the weather won't be too chilly.'

*****

Things certainly got chilly as the week progressed, and I'm not talking about the weather.

'I was the one he chose to introduce himself to first,' Jackie said when we met for coffee.

'But I saw him first,' Stella said.

'Actually,' I said. 'That was me.'

It was a wonder a hole wasn't worn in the pavement outside as my friends took turns to knock on William's door. There was always one of them going round with a cake tin or something on a plate covered with foil. It was getting embarrassing.

When I left for work one morning, I saw

Stella looking smug in the passenger seat of his car.

The day after that, he was over at Jackie's, and I could hear them laughing, even with my radio on.

'He's so charming,' she told me later. 'And that voice! So deep and masculine.'

'Humph!' I retorted. Really, after two husbands, she should know better than to go all gooey at the sound of a velvety voice.

'He makes me laugh,' Stella said.

'It could be an act,' I pointed out. 'He's on a charm offensive. Be careful.'

Jackie laughed. 'Oh, love, he is what he is, and that's a nice man. He rolled up his sleeves and sorted the leak under my sink.'

'That's nothing,' Stella said. 'When my car wouldn't start, he gave me a lift to town.'

'I wouldn't trust him,' I said.

It sounded like feeding time at the duck pond as they squawked in his defence.

He even asked to join our informal book club, and Jackie had said he could.

* * * * *

On book club night, Stella popped round to remind me.

'I won't be coming,' I said. 'But you might as well take the wine I was going to bring.'

'Where do you have to be that's more important than seeing your friends?' Stella demanded.

'Sick colleague from work,' I said. 'I promised I'd visit her.'

I was appalled at how easily the lies tripped from my tongue. And of course, I then had to go out.

When I got back, the book club meeting was still in full swing. I crept round in the dark, listening to the laughter and the rumbling sound of William's voice.

The truth was, I didn't know how to do this. Not a clue. I mixed with men at work all the time, but I was out of practice when it came to being sociable.

It didn't help that every time I saw William, my heart flip-flopped and my cheeks burned red. It was like being a teenager.

The day before the dinner party, I was trying to think up an excuse not to go when someone knocked on my door. I opened it to be confronted with a huge arrangement of flowers.

'Could you take these in for opposite?' the girl holding them asked, pointing at William's house. 'No one's in.'

The flowers were addressed to Grace Pascal and *Love is the word* was written on the card. Funny we'd never seen her. Maybe he kept her in the attic!

When I saw him arrive home, I hurried over with the flowers.

'For Grace,' I said, giving him an I-know-what-you're-up-to sort of look.

'Ah, my secret is out,' he smiled.

I didn't smile back. He'd been stringing my friends along and I couldn't forgive him for that.

* * * * *

I decided to go to the dinner to see Grace for myself, but Stella, Jackie and I were the only guests. He filled our glasses with champagne and we sipped it on his terrace. But it started to rain so we headed into the conservatory, where the flowers took pride of place on the table.

'Did Grace like her flowers?' I asked him, to the sound of two jaws dropping.

'Very much,' he said, without turning a hair.

As the evening wore on, my friends told him all about themselves.

'And how about you, William?' Jackie asked. 'What do you do?'

'I'm a writer,' he said, a touch of colour brightening his cheeks.

'He's on a charm offensive. Be careful'

'Really? What do you write?' Stella asked.

'Perhaps you can guess?' he said.

'Crime,' Jackie said at once.

'Thrillers,' Stella said.

'Horror,' I suggested coolly, and William just laughed.

'You're all wrong,' he said. 'Come and see.'

We followed him to his study where one wall was covered in bookshelves. It was the book on his beautiful desk that caught my eye. It was called *Love is the Word* by Grace Pascal. More of Grace's books were on the shelf.

I turned to look at him and he was smiling directly at me.

'You're Grace?' I asked, stunned.

'Well, my mother was. I use her name.'

Jackie snatched up the book. 'You're a romance writer!'

He plucked one from the shelf and handed it to me. 'Here, Alison. I think you'll like this one.'

'I don't need to, er, read romance,' I said, but it would have been rude not to accept.

* * * * *

The last thing I expected was to fall in love with the hero of the book – a man who really understood the heroine, who was painfully shy. She reminded me a little of me.

When I'd finished the book, I returned it immediately.

'What did you think?' he asked, and I saw a hint of vulnerability in his eyes.

'I loved it,' I replied.

'Did you like the bit where they were stranded? I stranded myself in a snowy forest so I'd know how they felt.'

'That was my favourite part,' I said, and found myself talking about it. 'I'd like to read more.'

He looked so pleased as he took another book from the shelf. When I returned it, I stayed for coffee and he told me how he'd spent time with the fire service to give his firefighter hero an authentic voice.

By the time I was on the ninth book and he was recounting his time with a motor-racing team, I realised there was one piece of research he hadn't told me about.

'You must have been in love,' I said. 'To write about it so well.'

'No,' he said wistfully. 'It's how I've always imagined it would be.'

'Me too,' I said, and I reached across the table and touched his hand. He looked at me for a moment and I thought I'd misjudged the situation, then his fingers closed around mine.

* * * * *

'Car's here!' Stella shouts and we troop out into the misty morning.

'You look like something out of one of William's books,' Jackie says approvingly.

'I don't know about that,' I say, bashfully. But my dress shimmers purest white and my heart is full as I travel to church with my two best friends – my bridesmaids – to marry the love of my life.

THE END

Teresa Ashby, 2023

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TV&REVIEWS

Our pick of what to watch this week, plus the best podcasts and new books...

Sally Lindsay is back as renowned and respected antiques dealer Jean White in the second series of crime drama *The Madame Blanc Mysteries*, which she co-created and co-writes with her friend and co-star Sue Vincent. Once again, Jean's expert knowledge provides the key to solving some puzzling cases against the backdrop of the beautiful French village of Sainte Victoire. Here, Sally reveals more...

What's life like for Jean now she's become less of an outsider in Saint Victoire?
She's been accepted by the locals, who are terribly impressed by her skills and knowledge, and she's happier than she has been in a long time.

Why is Jean such a good detective?
She's accumulated a vast knowledge of antiques since she was a little girl, as she's always been obsessed with them, and that means she has a vast historical knowledge and her observational skills are second to none. She sees things other people don't. She's also quite normal, so nobody is intimidated by her or hides anything in front of her. She can ask questions and people respond in a friendly way.

How would you describe your and Sue's research and writing process?
We gather information about unusual artefacts, unusual incidents in history or unusual characters. Sue is brilliant at research and finds the most bizarre artefacts, and I've always got my eye out as well. We put everything together and spend a few days discussing how we can intertwine this research into a murder mystery.

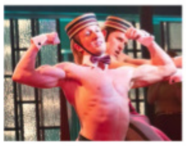
Do you have a favourite antique this series?
I'd be giving away the solution to the murders, because the revelation is always the secret of the antique! When we're writing, we believe every object has a story. Antiques are so special because they're almost like time machines – they take you back to that age.

✱ *The Madame Blanc Mysteries* is on Channel 5

Sally's back on the case as Madame Blanc

WHAT TO STREAM

The latest releases to watch on demand



Welcome To Chippendales

Disney+

This true-crime drama reveals how Somen 'Steve' Banerjee (Kumail Nanjiani) founded the world-famous male strippers in the 1970s and wouldn't let anyone stand in his way, even if it meant murder...

The Reunion

ITVX

The disappearance of a high-school student in 1997 is at the heart of this six-part drama set in the French Riviera. Years later, three friends reconnect at a school reunion and try to find the truth about what happened. Ioan Gruffudd and Dervla Kirwan star.

LISTEN UP

Clothing calamities and the wonder of words

MY WARDROBE MALFUNCTION
WITH SUSANNAH CONSTANTINE

My Wardrobe Malfunction with Susannah Constantine

With her new memoir out now, it's time to revisit Susannah's series about times our clothes let us down. Guests include Dannii Minogue and Sir Mo Farah. Acast, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify.

SOMETHING RHYMES WITH PURPLE

Something Rhymes With Purple

Discover some wacky words with Susie Dent and Gyles Brandreth. From a deep dive into the words we use, to the hidden origins of our vocabulary, it's a word love-in. Apple Podcasts, Acast, Google Podcasts, Spotify.

WHAT'S ON TV?

Our top picks from BBC, ITV, C4, Channel 5, Sky and more…

Next Level Chef

ITV1

Gordon Ramsay is at the helm of this cooking competition that sees three teams each cook in one of the three very different kitchens stacked on top of one another. Michelin-star chef Paul Ainsworth and *Next Level Chef US* star Nyesha Arrington will mentor the contestants.

Ant & Dec's Limitless Win

ITV1

Following a festive celebrity special, the tense game show returns for a new series that sees more contestants trying to climb the never-ending money ladder, with a limitless pot of cash up for grabs – but this time there's a twist as hosts Ant and Dec act as a lifeline.

Bradley & Barney Walsh: Breaking Dad

ITV1

Bradley Walsh and his thrill-seeking son explore Latin America in a new series of adventures. Their first stop is Mexico, where they try Lucha Libre wrestling, climb a mountain and head into a pitch-black cave full of bats and hanging snakes.

WORDS: MICHAEL DARLING. PHOTOS: CHANNEL 5, DISNEY+, ITV, ITVX, GETTY

BEST BOOKS

Zoe West picks the best reads for you

'Moving, page-turning . . . a treasure of a novel' AMANDA PROWSE
A lost child.
A long-kept secret.
The house that holds the key . . .
THE SECRETS OF ROCHESTER PLACE
IRIS COST
THIS WEEK'S HOT READ

For more books information, see goodtoknow.co.uk/books

The Secrets Of Rochester Place

by Iris Costello (£8.99, Penguin, PB)

Corinne, a 999 call handler, takes a call from a woman begging for help to save her daughter, who's trapped underneath a house. But Fire and Rescue find nothing at the given address, because Rochester Place does not exist. Corinne searches and finds a secluded plot of land and an old plaque dedicated to two women who died in the Blitz, 70 years ago that day! Is there a connection tying these three women together? This twisty saga of never-ending love will keep you guessing all the way.

SARAH MORGAN
Snowed in for Christmas

Snowed In For Christmas

by Sarah Morgan (£8.99, HarperCollins, PB)

Family Christmases can be a challenge, so what if you find yourself holed up with a clan that isn't even yours? That's what happens to Lucy when she gets cut off by the weather with the Millers in the Scottish Highlands. As tensions unravel, this is full of wintry drama to enjoy in the warm.

Playing Under The Piano
Hugh Bonneville

Playing Under The Piano

by Hugh Bonneville (£22, Little, Brown, HB)

We loved Hugh in *Downton Abbey* and *Paddington*. Now we love his entertaining memoirs. We learn why he once played Robert De Niro's right leg, and how he discovered that his mum had worked for the Secret Service. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll love Hugh even more.

Love Land II

For The Love Of The Land II

by Jenny Jefferies (£22, Meze Publishing, HB)

Celebrate British farmers and discover a host of glorious recipes with this sequel. It features 40 farmers sharing what British farming means to them – including inspiring women like Marion Regan, who supplies the all-important strawberries to Wimbledon. A truly delicious read!

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BUMPER MONEY-SAVING ISSUE
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BACKSTAGE FEUDS
Harry
TRAPPED!
PAY LESS THAN IN THE SHOPS

7 of the best SMART THERMOSTATS

woman
RATED BY US!

Take control of your heating and your bills with a thermostat you can change to suit your home

Most heating systems need a control hub, and a smart thermostat is just that. It's usually made up of two devices, one links to your boiler, while the actual thermostat is a wireless gadget you have on display, allowing you to check the room temperature or adjust it remotely. You can schedule a time or drop in temperature to trigger your heating to come on, helping you to monitor your usage.

Wiser
56%
20.5°
21°

Best for... simplicity

Wiser Thermostat Kit 1, from £159.99, shop.se.com
For a stripped back and simple interface, look no further than the Wiser thermostat kit 1. The system is easy to use and can be voice-controlled through Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa. You can also expand your kit by buying add-ons, such as radiator valve thermostats, to give you greater control over the heating in individual rooms.

12:30
21.0
21.0
Honeywell

Best for... maximum control

Honeywell Home TR6-HW Wireless Programmable Thermostat, £169.99, Screwfix
Not only does this thermostat control your heating, but your hot water timing too. Plus, the app features location tracking, so that it can warm up your home when you're nearby and switch off when you leave the house. We were also impressed with the touch-screen display, which has easily recognisable symbols to help guide you through the programming.

Best for... cutting costs

Thermostat Mini, £119, Hive
Hive makes the bold claim that this thermostat can save you up to £311 per year. Along with helping you to monitor and reduce your spending, this mini device comes with instant alerts to your app, frost protection and holiday mode, which allows you to manage your heating when you're away from home.

Best for... extra features

Tado Smart Thermostat Wired, £97.97, Wireless, £144.99, Currys

It'll switch off the heat if you leave a window open, warn you about system issues, and it takes the guesswork out of getting your home to feel comfortable. Once you master the set up, the Tado smart thermostat goes above and beyond to save energy with added features you won't see on similar products, and it offers room-by-room control.

19
19
20
20
21
somfy

Best for... tracking spending

Connected Wireless Smart Thermostat, £82, Somfy

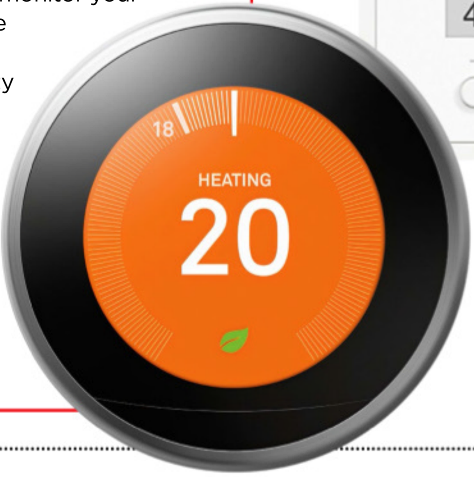
This sleek, simple thermostat is perfect for modern homes, with a minimal display on the device that can be controlled by touch or remotely through the free iOS or Android app. What we love most about this clever gadget is its ability to estimate your heating costs, so no more surprises when your bills arrive.

Best for... big spenders

Nest Smart Learning Thermostat, £189, Toolstation

This smart-looking, third-gen learning thermostat is able to monitor your habits and control the heating accordingly. There's also an activity sensor which adjusts the heating if someone's home. The black background changes to a bold orange when the heating kicks in, a stylish touch to notify you it's on.

WUNDA
23.4°
46%



Best for... ingenuity

WundaSmart Room Thermostat, £80, Wunda Group

This clever system's automated features are its selling point. The device comes with a geo-fencing feature, so you can set a perimeter for individual rooms and on leaving the room the thermostat will automatically cool or switch off – no more wasted energy!

WORDS: FUTURECONTENTHUB.COM

Columnist

View from THE BACK

Nicola Methven says what you're thinking

SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR AMAZING NHS

The first ever improvised episode of *Casualty* last month did an astonishing job of raising awareness about how tough it is to be a paramedic right now.

As a piece of television, watching the crews lurch from one crisis to another was pretty brutal. We saw a baby being delivered on a bus, a woman with a nut allergy stop breathing, a man with psychosis wielding a knife and a bloke with a bone sticking out of his arm having to wait eight hours.

Which was stressful enough.

But then came the drunk patients shouting the odds, furious non-urgent patients wanting to know why they couldn't get a bed and other patients that shouldn't have been patients at all wondering if someone could fetch them some chips?

Di Botcher as *Casualty* paramedic Jan Jennings

It fully brought home how frustrating it is for paramedics to be stuck outside hospitals for hours on end, unable to offload patients and prevented from attending all the other calls coming in. All thanks to years of NHS underfunding.

The delays caused response targets to be missed, leading to corners being cut and mistakes made – with horrific consequences.

By the end of the episode, I wondered how paramedics get through a single day, let alone a week or a whole career. Thank goodness in this case they were actors… but what they portrayed was horribly real.

Anyone who's ever called an ambulance for a non-emergency needs to hang their head in shame. Every time paramedics have to deal with a time-waster, someone else's life could be lost.

So as ambulance staff join nurses in strike action over pay, pensions and conditions, know that they are doing it as a last resort, because improvements simply *have* to be made. But is anyone in power actually listening? I think we all know the answer to that.

Kill them with kindness

One of the many great things about *Detectorists*, the gentle BBC comedy with Mackenzie Crook and Toby Jones as metal-detecting enthusiasts, is that it has a big heart. 'Kindness is underrated,' Crook explains. 'I think it's a superpower, almost. If people were kinder in general, the world would be a better place.' Let's take that with us into 2023.

Humble Hamza

A shout-out for Hamza Yassin, one of the best *Strictly Come Dancing* finalists the show has ever seen. Why did we love this wildlife cameraman and presenter so much? Because most of us had never heard of him before, and because we had no idea how much natural talent he was going to have. Add to that the fact he's the most humble, likeable guy, with the best manners possessed by anyone ever, and there you have it. With or without the Glitterball, Hamza of the Highlands is a huge winner.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

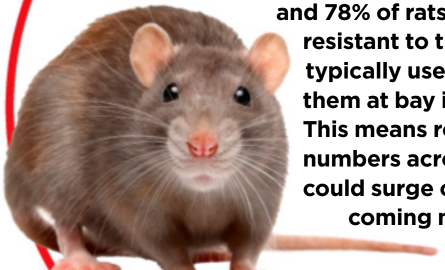
'Yelling and crying: those are my two strengths. I try to avoid sex scenes at all costs.'

Oscar-winning actor Olivia Colman knows what she's good at.

PHOTOS: BBC, GETTY

Oh rats!

Here's something to look forward to this year – a plague of rodents! A new study has discovered that 95% of mice and 78% of rats are now resistant to the poisons typically used to keep them at bay in the UK. This means rodent numbers across Britain could surge over the coming months. Aaarrghh.



*** Nicola Methven is TV Editor of the *Daily Mirror***

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